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EARNINGS AND LIVING STANDARDS IN MOSCOW

1. THE COST OF A MINIMUM DIET IN MOSCOW AND IN ENGLAND

The main data upon which this article is based were collected by the British delegates to the Moscow Economic Conference in April 1952.[1] They have been supplemented here and there from other sources. The delegates stayed in Moscow for only two weeks; but they could go freely into shops and markets, and see what goods were offered for sale and note their prices. They also gathered some information about individual persons' earnings and they went into several dwelling houses and learned how the families there actually lived. The specific data thus obtained could to some extent be verified by means of more general checks, such as figures of basic wages published in the newspaper ' Pravda ' or on posters outside factories. The difficulties of interpreting these data for the British readers are, however, considerable, since it is almost impossible to translate figures given in roubles into terms of pounds sterling, shillings, and pence.[2] No household accounts were available that would show in detail the purchasing power of Moscow earnings within the framework of the needs of a clearly defined social group. We have no authentic picture of how much of a given family income goes to purchase the essentials of life and how much is left over for semi-luxuries and luxuries, cultural or other. Generally speaking, it is not possible to take a pattern of British consumption and apply this to any part of the U.S.S.R.; for that, both the habits and the needs of the two peoples are too different. Snow lies in Moscow for 5 months of the year, and in January and February the temperature falls normally to below 14 deg. Fahrenheit. Housing conditions are very primitive by western standards, and the rooms very overcrowded. It would be impossible for us to assess what, under these circumstances, are the minimum requirements of clothing and fuel, except in the vaguest of terms.

What, however, we do know is that in order to be properly nourished, the Russian man, woman, and child, must obtain in their food certain

[1] Apart from P. Wiles the principal collectors of data were Professors Cairncross and Madge, and Mr. M. Dobb. We are also indebted to Mr. E. Orchard for supplementary information. None of the last four named, however, bears any responsibility for this article. A paper by Prof. Madge on the visit to Moscow will appear in the December number of ' Soviet Studies '. Other recent publications on the standard of living are ' Visit of the Delegation from the National Union of Railwaymen to the Soviet Union, Nov. 1951 ' and ' National and *per capita* Incomes of 70 Countries, 1949 ' (United Nations Publication). Both roughly confirm the results given here.

[2] The official rate of 11 roubles to the pound sterling appeared to overvalue about sevenfold the purchasing power of the rouble in terms of the retail cost of consumers' goods.

amounts of nutrients, and we can calculate the cost of an adequate diet in terms of roubles. We possess the basic data—the prices of foods sold in Moscow to the general public[1]—in sufficient detail, and we also have ready an outline schedule : we can utilize that which appears bi-annually in this BULLETIN showing the changes in the cost of a ' human needs ' diet (by British standards) to an English housewife.[2] It would, of course, be unreasonable to apply the English schedule without modifications to Moscow conditions. Equivalent diets in different countries could only in very exceptional circumstances be identical; usually, tastes, habits, and supplies are too different. We shall make allowance for this and shall attempt a comparison that, if it errs, does so because it rather underestimates than over-estimates the cost of food in Moscow. Thus in our schedule of a ' human needs ' diet in Table I, when applied to Russia, many foods that seemed to be common enough in Moscow but would have been rejected by the British housewife, are substituted for everyday English foods, on account of their greater cheapness. In particular, low-grade cooking oil has replaced lard; black rye bread[3] the English wheaten loaf; coarser cereals are substituted for three-quarters of the more refined English cereals.[4] Herrings are replaced by some other fish, which, in Moscow, cost only about half as much as did herrings. No actual figures of cost have been compiled for fresh vegetables, rhubarb, cocoa, and condiments, in the Moscow dietary, since the English foods under these headings were either very dear or unobtainable in Moscow, in April 1952. To fill the gap thus left in the dietary we have calculated the figures of their percentage cost in relation to the total cost, for the English dietary, and we have assumed that their relative cost in Moscow would have been proportionate. Actually, for identical items it would have been considerably higher; but there may be in Moscow less expensive substitutes for at least some of these foods and the Moscow housewife with a small income may employ them as a matter of course. Since tea is habitually consumed very weak in Russia we have allowed only 4 oz. of tea for a family of 5 persons. Lastly, in the Moscow dietary we have replaced 8 oz. of syrup by its nutritional—but cheaper—substitute, 6 oz. of sigar, since in Moscow sugar could be bought freely.

In order to avoid misunderstandings it is perhaps advisable to add here a qualification. A ' human needs ' diet as outlined in Table I does not represent an absolute but a relative standard; that is to say, it is taken to satisfy not only essential nutritional requirements but, more generally, culinary ' needs ' in relation to the general standard of living in England. Hence, if the standard of living in a country is lower—or higher—than in England, the meaning of ' human needs ' will be interpreted differently. We do not therefore suggest that the lowest paid Moscow worker—or, indeed, any

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[1] These prices refer to the period after the reduction in April 1952, which, for most farm produce, was fairly substantial. The delegates found—in spite of some statements to the contrary—that there were no significant differences between prices of the same foods sold in shops and sold in peasant markets. Nor indeed should there be; for now that rationing is abolished competition between these suppliers appeared in most instances well established.

[2] For a family consisting of husband, wife, and three children of school age. The prices are collected in the the southern Midlands and London.

[3] Often including flour made of grain that in Great Britain would be considered fit only for animal feeding.

[4] For the last quarter only we have allowed macaroni made of white flour.

TABLE I

Weekly Cost of a ' Human Needs ' Diet for a Family of 5 Persons in England and Moscow

	Quantity	Price per Unit[1]		Cost		% Cost in	
						England	*Moscow*
		s. d.	Rs.[2]	s. d.	Rs.[2]	%	%
Foods rationed in England :							
Meat[3]	3 lb 5 oz.	1 9	7.5	5 10	24.9	*9.6*	*9.8*
Bacon	1 lb 9 oz.	3 0	15.9	4 8¼	24.9	*7.7*	*9.8*
Margarine ...	2 lb 3 oz.	1 2	8.6	2 6½	18.9	*4.2*	*7.4*
Cooking Fat ...	10 oz.	1 4	10.7	10	6.7	*1.4*	*2.6*
Sugar	3 lb 2 oz.	6	4.7	1 6¾	14.8	*2.6*	*5.8*
Tea	4 oz.[4]	3 4	52.2	10	13.1	*1.4*	*5.1*
Cheese	5 oz.	2 0	11.4	7½	3.5	*1.0*	*1.4*
Eggs	10 eggs	4½	1.3	3 9	12.5	*6.2*	*4.9*
				20 8	119.3	*34.1*	*46.8*
Unrationed Animal Protein Foods :							
Liver	12 oz.	1 10	5.7	1 4½	4.3	*2.3*	*1.7*
Fish	2 lb 8 oz.	10[5]	4.0[6]	2 1	9.9	*3.4*	*3.9*
Milk (*domestically consumed*) ...	18 pt.	6	1.3	9 0	23.6	*14.9*	*9.3*
				12 5½	37.8	*20.6*	*14.9*
Main Carbohydrate Foods :							
Bread	20 lb	4¼[7]	0.8	7 1¾	16.4	*11.8*	*6.4*
Flour	2 lb	5¼[8]	2.8	10¾	5.6	*1.5*	*2.2*
Potatoes ...	21 lb	2[9]	0.5	3 7½	11.3	*6.0*	*4.4*
				11 8	33.3	*19.3*	*13.0*
Other Foods :							
Cereals	5 lb 8 oz.	10	2.0	4 7	11.2	*7.6*	*4.4*
Pulses	2 lb 8 oz.	1 0	4.5	2 5¾	11.4	*4.2*	*4.4*
Dried Fruit ...	8 oz.	1 0	4.5	6	2.3	*0.8*	*0.9*
Jam (plum) ...	6 oz.	1 3	9.0	5½	7.5	*0.7*	*2.9*
Syrup[10]	8 oz.	11	4.7[11]	5½	1.8	*0.7*	*0.7*
Fresh Vegetables and Fruit ...	15 lb	4	1.4[12]	5 2	21.7[13]	*8.5*	*8.5*
Condiments, etc.	—	—	—	2 0¾	8.6[14]	*3.5*	*3.5*
				15 8½	64.5	*26.0*	*25.3*
Total				60 6	254.9	*100.0*	*100.0*

[1] The price units used are, for England and Moscow : lb, pint, egg. [2] Rounded off to the first decimal place. [3] Inexpensive cuts of boiling and roasting meat. [4] 10 oz. of tea would be available to the English family. [5] Herring. [6] Fish cheaper than herrings in Moscow. [7] 1¾ lb for 7½d. [8] 3 lb for 1s. 4d. [9] 7 lb for 1s. 2½d. [10] For Moscow, 8 oz. of syrup have been replaced by 6 oz. of sugar. [11] Price of sugar. [12] Obtained by dividing 21.7 roubles by 15. [13] 8.5 per cent of 254.9. [14] 3.5 per cent of 254.9.

Moscow worker—normally buys this diet. For one thing it is, as we shall see, quite beyond the means of many working-class families in Moscow; for another, the Moscow worker seems to prefer occasional abundant meals alternating with long stretches of the plainest foods, to a properly balanced diet. Nevertheless, the diet schedule set out in Table I provides an outline of the cost of what a *British* working-class housewife would certainly consider a minimum diet, and the figure of cost in roubles is computed in terms of foodstuffs that in Moscow were in general use. But it should be clearly understood that even with the adjustments made by us, the diet would be far above of what in relation to the Moscow working-class standard of living, would represent a ' human needs ' level of food consumption.

The prices and the cost of English foods in Table I are given in shillings and pence and those of the Russian foods in roubles. All the prices were collected in typical working-class shops and markets. In both instances the prices refer to the units of measurement customary in this country, *viz.*, lb. and pint. The price unit for eggs is one egg. In the English schedule the price of vegetables is the weighted average of 5 lb. of cabbage, 4½ lb. of swedes, 3 lb. of beetroot, 1 lb. of carrots, ½ lb. of onions, and 1 lb. of rhubarb. For the Russian schedule the corresponding ' average price ' was obtained by dividing 8½ per cent of the total estimated cost of the diet by 15. The last two columns in Table I show the percentage costs of the individual items in the schedules, in relation to the corresponding total cost, which in each case has been equated to 100. In absolute figures, the cost of the English diet was 60s. 6d.; that of the slightly different diet in Moscow was 254.9 roubles.

2. Earnings and Wages

The figure of cost of a ' human needs ' diet, as defined, can be utilized for assessing—though only within fairly broad limits—the purchasing power of any given income, and, further, for comparing the ' real ' values of specific incomes in different countries. Let us first consider some general figures of earnings of industrial and related workers in the U.K. The latest official figures available refer to October 1951.[1] There was some further rise in earnings from then to April 1952, but for the purpose of this paper the figures as they stand will suffice. Table II gives the average weekly earnings of adult male and adult female workers and also the average earnings of all workers, including juveniles. To these sets of figures we have added two others showing the actual average weekly income of an adult male worker with three dependent children. His average earnings would be raised by 10s. in the form of family allowances. He would pay no income tax on a weekly gross income of between 176s. and 182s., but would have to pay his contributions to the National Insurances and, probably, also to a Trade Union, the former amounting to 5s. 1d. and the latter to, perhaps, 1s.[2] Since the

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[1] Ministry of Labour Gazette, March 1952.

[2] One shilling a week seems to be a reasonable figure in view of the rates quoted by N. Barou in *British Trade Unions* (pp. 258–61), if we exclude the part of the payment intended to provide large Friendly Benefits.

TABLE II

Monthly U.K. Earnings in October 1951

	Average Earnings[1]		' Human Needs ' Diet Cost as Percentage of Earnings
	s.	d.	%
Manufacturing Industries Only :			
Male, 21 years and over	737	7	35
Female, 18 years and over	388	3	67
Average per Worker (including all juveniles)	599	2[2]	43
Male, 21 years and over, with 3 Dependent Children	754	3	34
Manufacturing, Mining,[3] Building, Transport, Government, etc., Workers :			
Male, 21 years and over	711	5	36
Female, 18 years and over	390	0	67
Average per Worker (including all Juveniles)	604	7[2]	43
Male, 21 years and over, with 3 Dependent Children ...	728	2	35

[1] Gross, except the figures for adult male with 3 dependent children, which represent *net income* (average gross earnings *plus* 10s. family allowances *minus* 6s. 1d. National Insurance and Trade Union contributions). One month is counted as 30/7 of a week.

[2] Weighted average. [3] Excluding coal mining.

cost of our ' human needs ' diet in Table I is calculated for a family consisting of husband, wife, and three dependent children, these figures of *net* income are of some interest. A woman with three dependent children would, of course, also receive the family allowance and would have to pay her contributions to the National Insurances (4s.) and the Trade Union. However, no adjustments have been made for this in Table II, since we intend to employ the figure of cost of a ' human needs ' diet, mainly as a yardstick for measuring earnings in general. In the last column the cost of a ' human needs ' diet in England—60s. 6d.—is expressed as a percentage of the several figures of earnings (or income), showing, *e.g.*, that a father with three dependent children would, on the average, have drawn an income about three times as large as required for the purchase of a ' human needs ' diet, while the unsupplemented gross earnings of the average woman worker would have been enough to pay 1½ times for a ' human needs ' diet for 5 persons.

Let us now look at some figures of earnings obtained in Moscow in April 1952. All occupations in U.S.S.R. are open to men and women alike under conditions of equal pay for equal work, although, of course, women predominate in the lighter and men in the heavier industries. Contrary to common opinion, the income tax is quite a considerable burden on the poor. For while the maximum marginal rate is only 13 per cent of the gross income,[1] there are no personal allowances at all, and no tax reduction is given for less

[1] This marginal rate is applied to earned incomes above 1000 roubles per month. Income tax starts at 260 roubles per month, and marginal rates are fixed for ascending stages of income, beginning at 5¼ per cent for an income over 260 roubles and rising gradually to 13 per cent.

than 4 dependents. If the number is larger, the tax charged is reduced by 30 per cent—a far more regressive system[1] than the British. In a family with three dependent children the fourth dependent could be the housewife. But normally she would work—indeed, she usually has to, in order to make ends meet, as will soon be realized from a study of the figures of actual earnings in Table III. If she works, the tax reduction will not apply, and she has to pay on her own earnings the appropriate income tax. Family allowances are given in Moscow for any dependent child after the third, but

TABLE III

Monthly Earnings in Moscow in April 1952

	Gross Earnings	Net Earnings (Gross Earnings) *minus* Income Tax and Trade Union contributions)[1]	Net Earnings *minus* state Loan	'Human Needs' Diet Cost as Percentage of	
				Net Earnings	Net Earnings *minus* State Loan
	Roubles	Roubles	Roubles	%	%
Ice Breaker (in street, woman) ...	500	469	427	233	256
Young Shoe Factory Operative[2] (men and women)	650	602	548	181	199
'Red October' Sweets Factory[3] Worker	700	647	589	169	185
Teacher in Pedagogic Inst. (after 1 year)	1050	951	863	115	127
do. (after 5 years)	1250	1080	980	101	111
do. (with 'candidatura')[4] ...	2500	2198	1990	50	55
4th Officer on River Fleet	1250	1123	1019	97	107
Intourist Chauffeur	1600	1424	1291	77	85
Railway Shunter[5]	1200–1750	1316	1193	83	92
Railway Engine Driver[5]	2750–3850	2886	2611	38	42
Moskvich Auto Factory:					
Minimum	700	647	589	169	185
Maximum	2500	2198	1990	50	55
Average for Factory Worker[5] ...	1100–1500	1166	1058	94	103
Non-Specialist Stakhanovite ...	1500	1338	1213	82	90
Specialist Stakhanovite	2500	2198	1990	50	55
Man Fitting Back Axles	1400	1252	1135	87	96
Woman in Machine Shop (after 1 yr)	1200	1080	980	101	111
do. (after 5 years)	1800	1596	1446	68	76
Factory Manager[5]	7000–8000	6498	5873	17	19

[1] Of a worker with less than 4 dependents.

[2] Excluding trainees and apprentices. [3] Mostly women.

[4] Also after 5 years. 'Candidatura' roughly corresponds to an M.A. from a university demanding a master's thesis.

[5] The figures in all but the first column are based on the average figure of earnings.

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[1] Regressive, perhaps, only in the formal sense, for the U.S.S.R. For in a country where all gross incomes are planned by the state it may be meaningless to speak of a regressive or progressive income tax, as the desired degree of equality—or inequality—can always be achieved by the manipulation of gross incomes.

only until it reaches the age of 5 years. They amount of 40 roubles per month.[1]

Every Russian worker must pay a Trade Union contribution amounting to 1 per cent of his gross earnings. There is no National Insurance contribution : the social services are administered by the Trade Union, but are financed out of the ' wage fund ', a pool of planned magnitude which also provides for all wages. The 1 per cent deduction from the wages for the Trade Union seems to be applied essentially towards the cost of Trade Union administration and the running of factory clubs; no ' friendly benefits ' are given by Trade Unions in the U.S.S.R.

All workers—except, perhaps, the very poorest—are expected to subscribe to the quasi-compulsory state loan, generally one month's earnings per year. Since we have no knowledge as to the certainty of repayment, the way in which these subscriptions—or levies—should be classified and treated is doubtful; we therefore show in Table III figures of ' net ' earnings with and without this deduction.[2] In the last two columns the cost of a ' human needs ' diet, as calculated for Moscow, is expressed as a percentage of the earnings, the monthly cost of the diet having been calculated from the weekly figures in Table I, on the assumption that the cost per month amounts to thirty-seventh of the weekly cost. It will be seen that even without the deduction for the state loan, none of the workers, except the highest paid engine driver, had an income equal—in terms of the cost of the ' human needs ' diet—to that of the average U.K. worker, while a large number were earning far less than would have been required even to purchase that diet. Actually, the picture in Table III is more favourable than are the general conditions of the working class, for it shows mainly the earnings of relatively highly paid workers,[3] who in the Soviet economy are very much in the minority. Yet even the Stakhanovite in the Moskvich auto factory—the worker who sets the pace for others—if a non-specialist, had at his disposal an income in terms of the cost of the ‘ human needs ’ diet of only between 67s. and 75s. a week, and his skilled counterpart an income of between 109s. and 120s.

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[1] Worth to a working class family—in terms of purchasing power—to between 2s. 6d. and 3s. 4d. a week. In April 1952, the children's allowance in the U.K.—starting already with the second child—was 5s. In September 1952, it was raised to 8s. Maternity allowances are given in Russia for the fourth child and all subsequent children, amounting to 40 roubles for the fourth and to 60 roubles for each following child. A British mother can claim a maternity allowance from the first child—£4 if the mother is not working and £27 8s. if she works.

[2] This state loan carries an annual rate of interest of 3 per cent and is repaid to the subscribers in the form of lottery drawings. The degree of compulsion was explained by a Soviet worker thus, ' It is not compulsory, but your comrades reproach you if you do not pay it. Nearly everyone pays one twelfth of his earnings. My brother, who is a keen Communist, pays more.'

[3] As can be seen by comparing the figures in Table III with those in Table IV, which show the earnings in comparable British jobs. For while the monthly earnings in the U.K. averaged per head about £30 (Table II), the unweighted average of the figures in Table IV—omitting the earnings of a factory manager—gives a figure of earnings of over £38 per head. The average earnings in Table III—omitting the earnings of a factory manager—are 1430 roubles. On the assumption that this figure bears the same relation to the Moscow average earnings as the figure of earnings obtained from Table IV bears to the U.K. earnings, the average for Moscow would be 1100 roubles per month. However, as is evident from Table III itself and also from the pre-war data in A. Bergson, *The Structure of Soviet Wages*, the Soviet wage structure is much more unequal than the British, and the actual average Moscow wage is certainly less than 1100 roubles.

In order to make possible some comparison between specific Moscow and U.K. earnings, we have obtained figures of average earnings from British workers in jobs that most closely resemble the Moscow jobs listed in Table III. These figures of gross earnings are set out in Table IV. Since the normal working week in Moscow is 48 hours we also show as far as possible the weekly number of hours on which the figures of wages are based.

TABLE IV

Average Monthly Earnings in U.K., 1952

	Hours per week	Gross Earnings per month[1]	
		s	d.
Snow Sweeper[2]	44	535	9
Young Shoe Factory Operatives (men and women)[3]	44	379	0
Sweets Factory Workers :			
Male : Syrup Maker	53¾	779	5
Sugar Boiler	57¼	904	4
Packer	52	662	2
Female : General Hand	43½	369	7[4]
do.	47¾	387	1[4]
Machine Wrapper	49¾	459	0
Teacher in Training College, after 1 year[5]		958	4
do., after 5 years[5]		1083	4
do., senior lecturer, after 5 years[5]		1541	8
Motor Coach Driver		642	10
Railway Shunter	49	649	8
Railway Engine Driver		857	3[6]
Auto Factory Workers :			
Male Hands on time rate	44	652	3
do., on piece rate	44	966	7
Rate Fixer[7]	44	1125	0
Man Fitting Back Axles	44	966	7
Women, unskilled Operatives	44	660	0
Works Manager		2500s.–3333s.	

[1] A month is taken as 30/7 of a week.

[2] Male, permanent Corporation employee. The rate for casual work is 2s. 9⅜d. per hour. No women are employed on the job, but if they were they would be paid less than a man, approximately 4/5 of his wages.

[3] Day workers on contract rates. We have taken the unweighted average of the lowest half of the 1951 rates for men and women.

[4] Excluding output bonus.

[5] The rates for women are about 10% below the rates for men.

[6] Approximately.

[7] The nearest approximation to the Stakhanovite. There are no different rate fixers employed for unskilled and skilled jobs.

3. UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICES

There is no unemployment insurance in the U.SS.R. and no provision for unemployment benefit, nor anything corresponding to the National Assistance Board as a last protection for those that slip through the mesh of the insurances. However, the claim that there is in Moscow no unemployment of the employable, appeared to be justified, except, no doubt, for some temporary unemployment due to seasonal and other incidental causes. At one time, labour turnover was very great, though it does not seem to be so any more. This can hardly be due to the universal system of labour passes which controls all hiring and dismissing of labour, since it existed already during the period of high labour turnover. It may be that factories are now more successful in retaining their proficient workers through paying much better wages for long service—which appeared to be a general practice—and by providing housing accommodation for the workers and their families. Nevertheless, some unemployment must surely arise when factories retool, when materials fail to arrive, when outdoor occupations are interrupted owing to seasonal causes, etc. It seems that in such cases the worker is not laid off but is given the fixed ' basic wage ' appropriate to his job. This is also the wage on which he has to live if his output is not considered to merit a bonus or if he has forfeited his bonus through some form of carelessness.[1]

It is, then, of interest to consider some Moscow basic wages and see how these compare with the British unemployment and Public Assistance benefits. The British rates in 1952 are shown in Table V, the old rates that were in force in April and also the new ones, applied, respectively, since June and July. The Public Assistance rates include Family Allowances, the unemployment rates exclude them. In the penultimate row of the Table we have set out the exact figures of benefits for a married man with three dependent children at school, and in the last row the cost of a ' human needs ' diet is again expressed as a percentage of each of these income figures. If we then turn to the Moscow figures of basic wages in Table VI we find that only the chief engineer in a Moscow Ministry could command a basic wage about equivalent in purchasing power—in terms of the ' human needs ' diet —to the British unemployment and Public Assistance rates in April, while for the rates in June and July we have to climb even higher, since they can be compared only with net basic wages of the head of a group and those of a chief draughtsman in the Ministry of Cotton Growing. Actually the British allowances would often be still larger than this; for if the recipient has not more than £75 of ordinary and £375 of war savings not only is his unemployment benefit raised as a matter of right through the Public Assistance to the Public Assistance level—which is considered the subsistence level *excluding* rent—but he also obtains a rent allowance, which normally covers the full cost of the rent.

[1] Labour discipline is very strict, and any form of absenteeism or ' loafing on the job ' is punishable by fines or, if it occurred several times, by jail. For the latter, a compulsory labour sentence at the place of his employment may be substituted. In case of theft, wanton destruction, or intentional spoilage of materials, products, instruments, work clothes, and other property issued for the use by an employee, he is liable to pay up to fivefold the amount of damage. Even the basic wage is not paid unless a prescribed minimum output is attained. The Soviet Labour Code, as amended in 1934, states : If an employee in a governmental, public, or co-operative enterprise, institution, or business, fails through his own fault to attain the standard of output prescribed for him, he shall be paid according to the quantity and quality of his output but shall not be guaranteed any minimum-wage. (Quoted from *Elements of Soviet Labour Law*, Vladimir Gsovski, in the Monthly Labour Review, March and April, 1951—an extensively documented article).

TABLE V

Weekly Unemployment and Public Assistance Benefits in U.K.

	April 1952		July 1952	June 1952
	Unemployment	Public Assistance	Unemployment	Public Assistance
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Single Adult	26 0	24 0	32 6	35 0
Husband and Wife	41 0	40 0	54 0	59 0
Dependents :				
21 years and over	—	20 0	—	31 0
18—21 years	—	17 6	—	26 0
16—18 years	—	15 0	—	21 6
11—16 years	—	10 6[1]	—	16 0[1]
5—11 years	—	9 0[1]	—	13 6[1]
under 5 years	—	7 6[1]	—	11 0[1]
first child	10 0	—	10 6	—
all other children, each ...	2 6	—	2 6	—
Family with 3 Dependent Children of School Age (Including Family Allowances)	66 0	67 0	79 6[2]	99 6
'Human Needs' Diet Cost as Percentage of Allowance for Family with 3 Dependent Children	92%	90%	76%	61%

[1] Including Family Allowance.

[2] 85s. 6d. from September 1952, when the Family Allowance will go up from 5s. to 8s., per child per week. As before, the Allowance will be given for each child after the first.

TABLE VI

Monthly Basic Wages in Moscow in April 1952

	Wages Gross	Net Wages (Grs. Wages *minus* Income Tax & Trade Union Contributions)	'Human Needs' Diet Cost as Percentage of Net Wages
	Roubles	Roubles	%
Ice Breaker (in street, woman)	300	286	382
Telephonist	410	387	282
Laboratory Hand, Institute of Experimental Endicrinology	335–550	418[1]	262
Typist in Ministry	600	558	196
Lorry Driver in Transport Office	700–800	690[1]	158
Track Repair Worker, Moscow-Donbass Rly....	500–800	602[1]	181
Taxi Driver, 3rd Class	500	469	233
do., 2nd Class	600	558	196
do., 1st Class	700	647	169
Experimental Engineer } in Ministry ...	1100	994	110
Construction Engineer } in Ministry ...	1100–1500	1166[1]	94
Chief Engineer } in Ministry ...	1300–1400	1209[1]	90
Motor Mechanic in Moscow Mint	1200	1080	101
Head of Group } Ministry of Cotton Growing	1600	1424	77
Chief Draughtsman } Ministry of Cotton Growing	2000	1768	62
Head of Tech. Dept. } Ministry of Cotton Growing	2500	2198	50

[1] Based on average.

Table VI is arranged similarly to Table III, but we have not deducted from the wages the subscription to the State loan—though, possibly, if the bonus were lost through inefficiency, a worker particularly anxious to show that he is a good Communist would subscribe the sum expected from him. Moreover, in spite of the uncertainty of repayment, the state loan —or some other form of steady savings—is essential for anyone desiring some small measure of security in old age. For old-age pensions, paid through the trade unions, are very low; apart from underground miners and a few other categories, the maximum is 240 roubles per month.[1] Grown up children are supposed to look after their parents, and grand-parents nearly always live with the families of their children. Medical attendance, dental treatment, and medicaments are free. We have no knowledge of how efficient this health service is, but—as in Britain—the well-to-do prefer to pay for treatment. There is also some industrial injuries benefit. All the social services are non-contributory; but private voluntary insurance is possible and is encouraged.

4. Income and Household Expenditure

From the foregoing it will be clear that in Muscovite working-class families both husband and wife have to be breadwinners. They can send the children to state crèches or schools where they are looked after during the day and given three meals at a monthly cost to the parents of from 25 to 125 roubles, according to income. For 5 or 6 roubles the workers can usually buy a meal in the canteens of large factories. If in a family with three children husband and wife are working on 25 days a month, each of them buying one meal a day at work, the cost of their own and the children's meals away from the home would amount to between 625 and 675 roubles. Their joint net earnings, on the figures provided, might average 1600 roubles.[2] After paying for the meals set out above this would leave them with about 950 roubles with which to purchase additional food—at least 15 meals per week for each of the parents and three meals for each of the children—and all the other items necessary for life. If we assume that the meals prepared at home reach the level of the ' human needs ' diet as outlined for Moscow, their cost would represent approximately 43 per cent of the cost of the complete diet, *i.e.*, 470 roubles per month. Thus after buying the essential food, the family would have 480 roubles per month for all other expenditure.

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[1] If the purchasing power of the rouble is between 3d. and 4d. for the working-class family, this would be about 15s. and 20s. per week. In Britain the standard rates of old age pension were 30s. for a single person and 50s. for a couple. From October 1952, they have been raised to 32s. 6d. and 54s. respectively. Further, the Public Assistance Board will help with the rent, if necessary, provided the pensioner has not more than £75 of ordinary savings and £375 of war savings. If a woman continues working between the age of 60 and 65 years, or a man between the age of 65 and 70, 3s. are added to the weekly pension for each year at work, or 5s. for a couple. Hence, a woman taking up her pension at the age of 65 or a man taking it up at 70, obtains an additional 15s. per week, while a couple obtains an additional 25s.

[2] It must, however, be pointed out that statisticians working on data relating to the Soviet wage fund get a lower figure for the average earnings of industrial workers and employees. Four separate authorities give the average annual earnings as about 7,000 roubles p.a., in 1948. As earnings have hardly risen since then—so the delegates were informed—monthly average earnings would have amounted to only about 600 roubles. Nevertheless, our estimate seems in better agreement with the wage scales we present, and in the context of this article it seemed fairer to over-estimate than to under-estimate the average earnings. (*Cf.* N. Jasny, The Soviet Price System, pp. 22–30.)

Housing in Moscow is scarce and overcrowding is general, but rents are low.[1] Six square metres of floor space is considered the minimum sanitary living room, though many families attain not even that. The usual rent is 1.3 roubles per square metre per month. Hence a family consisting of 5 persons may only pay for their accommodation between 40 and 50 roubles per month.[2] Fuel is generally cheap, but the requirements of individual families vary very considerably, according to whether or not a house is centrally heated and provided with a hot-water system. We shall certainly not over-estimate the monthly expenditure on housing, fuel, and lighting, if we put it at 80 roubles per month. Of the total income, 400 roubles would then be available for clothing, household requirements and utensils, fares to and from work, drink, tobacco, amusements, etc.

What can a family in Moscow buy with this ? They certainly will need some clothing and household essentials. The cost of a number of these items is shown in Tables VII and VIII. The prices in shillings and pence were obtained in London for goods approximately corresponding to those that were available in Moscow, but all were certainly of a somewhat better quality in London. We have expressed the Moscow prices as prcentages of 600, 1000, and 1600 roubles, which we have taken to represent low, medium, and high—or joint—monthly net earnings. Similarly we have expressed the English prices as percentages of the average monthly earnings of an industrial male worker over 21 years of age and of an industrial female worker over 18 years of age, the latter obtaining per month approximately 390s. and the former 730s.

It will be seen that in terms of even the highest of our figures of Moscow workers' earnings, clothing and all essential household articles took a larger proportion of the worker's earnings than did similar articles in London of U.K. earnings. Only electric washing machines and refrigerators were relatively cheap in Moscow.

5. QUALIFICATIONS

We have made our comparisons as straightforward as possible, but as we have already pointed out, the differences in habits, climate, supplies, etc., in the two countries are very substantial, and that is true even if we confine our survey to large industrial towns. It seems therefore worth listing some of the factors which, in the foregoing, received little or no mention; thus, some bias in the one or the other direction might have crept in between the lines.

The economic conditions of the Moscow worker may be put into a slightly more favourable light by drawing attention to the following points :

(*a*) We have chosen in the foregoing a medium sized family. The Soviet

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[1] Some details of actual housing conditions are given in Appendix A.

[2] There are no rates.

TABLE VII

Prices of Clothing and Monthly Earnings in Moscow and U.K.

	Price in Moscow	Moscow Price as Percentage of			Price in London		London Price as Percentage of	
		Low Earnings (600 roubles)	Medium Earnings (1000 roubles)	High Earnings (1600 roubles)			Woman's Av. Earnings (390s.)	Man's Av. Earnings (730s.)
	Roubles	%	%	%	s.	d.	%	%
Men's Clothing :								
Suit, cheapest, ready made	360	60.0	36.0	22.5	117	0	30.0	16.0
Overcoat, winter, cheapest	353	58.8	35.3	22.1	117	6	30.0	16.0
do., average	996	166.0	99.6	62.3	130	0	33.3	17.8
Trousers, union flannel, average	120	20.0	12.0	7.5	26	0	6.7	3.6
Raincoat, cotton gabardine, average ...	525	87.5	52.5	32.8	84	0	21.5	11.5
Shirt, cotton, cheapest	69	11.5	6.9	4.3	15	11	4.1	2.2
do., better	121	20.2	12.1	7.6	20	0	5.1	2.7
Shoes, poor quality	227	37.8	22.7	14.2	35	0	9.0	4.8
Women's clothing :								
Suit, cheapest	490	81.7	49.0	30.6	100	0	25.6	13.7
do., slightly better	550	91.7	55.0	34.4	130	0	33.3	17.8
Woollen Dress	367	61.2	36.7	23.0	60	0	15.4	8.2
Cotton Dress	150	25.0	15.0	9.4	20	0	5.1	2.7
Overcoat, winter, cheapest	398	66.3	39.8	24.9	95	0	24.4	13.0
do., better	550	91.7	55.0	34.4	130	0	33.3	17.8
do., summer	534	89.0	53.4	33.4	100	0	25.6	13.7
Raincoat, cotton, unlined	176	29.3	17.6	11.0	39	11	10.2	5.5
Slip, rayon, cheapest	28	4.7	2.8	1.8	5	11	1.5	0.8
Shoes, Oxford type	250	41.7	25.0	15.6	45	9	11.7	6.3
Materials[1]								
Cotton fabric, cheapest	8.8	1.5	0.9	0.6	2	11	0.8	0.4
do., medium	13.5	2.3	1.4	0.8	3	8	0.9	0.5
Rayon fabric, cheapest	17.9	3.0	1.8	1.1	3	3	0.8	0.4
do., medium	25.6	4.3	2.6	1.6	3	11	1.0	0.5
Woollen fabric, cheapest	36.5	6.1	3.7	2.3	5	6	1.4	0.8
do., good quality	211.5	35.2	21.2	13.2	40	0	10.3	5.5

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[1] All prices given per yard.

TABLE VIII

Prices of Household Goods and Monthly Earnings in Moscow and U.K.

	Price in Moscow	Moscow Price as Percentage of			Price in London		London Price as Percentage of	
		Low Earnings (600 roubles)	Medium Earnings (1000 roubles)	High Earnings (1600 roubles)			Woman's Av. Earnings (390s.)	Man's Av. Earnings (730s.)
	Roubles	%	%	%	s.	d.	%	%
Bedstead, single, metal, cheapest	142	23.7	14.2	8.9	45	0	11.5	6.2
do., double, walnut, with box mattress ...	3200	533.3	320.0	200.0	400	5	102.7	54.8
Chair, plain wooden	45	7.5	4.5	2.8	18	6	4.7	2.5
Armchair, upholstered	925	154.2	92.5	57.8	122	8	31.5	16.8
Table, deal	400	66.7	40.0	25.0	70	0	17.9	9.6
do., walnut	610	101.7	61.0	38.1	300	0	76.9	41.1
Kitchen Cupboard, cheapest	430	71.7	43.0	26.9	215	0	55.1	29.5
do., better	600	100.0	60.0	37.5	270	0	69.2	37.0
Radio Set, medium	1000	166.7	100.0	62.5	300	0	76.9	41.1
Alarm Clock	65	10.8	6.5	4.1	18	6	4.7	2.5
Pedal Cycle, medium	945	157.5	94.5	59.0	300	0	76.9	41.1
Electric Refrigerator, small	800	133.3	80.0	50.0	1000	0	256.4	137.0
do., larger	3500	583.3	350.0	218.8	1620	0	415.4	221.9
Electric Washing Machine	750	125.0	75.0	46.9	840	0	215.4	115.1
Sheet, single, cotton, cheapest	57.0	9.5	5.7	3.6	11	0	2.8	1.5
Terry Towel, cheapest	22.0	3.7	2.2	1.4	2	6	0.6	0.3
do., better	48.4	8.1	4.8	3.0	5	6	1.4	0.8
Kitchen Towel, cheapest	7.8	1.3	0.8	0.5	2	3	0.6	0.3
do., better	14.9	2.5	1.5	0.9	3	9	0.9	0.5
Bucket, enamel	32.1	5.3	3.2	2.0	6	9	1.7	0.9
do., galvanized	12.3	2.0	1.2	0.8	4	9	1.2	0.7
Kettle, aluminium	110.0	18.3	11.0	6.9	4	0	1.0	0.5
Saucepan, aluminium, 3½ pint	17.0	2.8	1.7	1.1	4	3	1.1	0.6
do., 4½ pint	50.0	8.3	5.0	3.1	5	3	1.3	0.7
Cup and Saucer, earthenware	5.4	0.9	0.5	0.3	1	1	0.3	0.1
Teapot, earthenware	10.9	1.8	1.1	0.7	1	11	0.5	0.3
Plate, large, earthenware	10.2	1.7	1.0	0.6	1	2	0.3	0.2

income tax favours the childless, and so also do its social services, though very large Communist families are encouraged by means of medals and also by financial assistance.

(*b*) Factories usually give their workers a certain amount of working clothes free (Spetsodezhda). It is not known how much, but the institution seems to be more important than in Britain.

(*c*) A few holidays, especially in workers' sanatoria, are subsidized. It is impossible to say precisely to how much that amounts, nor is it clear that this privilege is not concentrated on those with already fairly high incomes. From the data available it would appear that, on the average, an ordinary worker may expect some such help about once in 12 years. Ordinary holidays are given annually and are paid in much the same way as the British workers'.

(*d*) The 'Palaces of Culture' attached to Moscow factories may be superior on the average to the clubs available free or at a nominal payment to British workers. This was certainly true of the single 'Palace' which the delegates were shown at the Stalin auto works.

(*e*) Shopping hours are more convenient, since the shops stay open longer.

(*f*) It is perhaps more common in Moscow than in England to supplement one's earnings by taking on odd jobs in one's off-time.

(*g*) Unemployment is lower in Moscow. There has never been a slump even in an isolated commodity.

(*h*) The standard of Moscow working-class food consumption is much lower than the British standard. Low grade cereal foods and potatoes are, however, relatively cheaper in Moscow than other foods, as compared with the prices of similar foods in Britain. Hence, the actual purchasing power of the rouble for working-class food is higher than suggested by our comparative figures in Table I, comparable, perhaps, to an exchange value of the rouble to 4d. (See also footnote 4 on page 324).

Against these 'advantages' may be set the following 'disadvantages':

(*a*) The *normal* Russian working week is a full 48 hours, while in Britain it is for most workers between 42 and 44 hours.

(*b*) Fines for lateness and bad work are very high in terms of earnings, and are much more common than in Britain.

(*c*) Many of our figures of Moscow earnings depend on bonus which, in fact, may have been received only by a particular individual, while our figures of average British earnings are based on the amounts actually paid out to all workers. The whole Moscow wage level may also have been overestimated by us.[1]

(*d*) There is a severe shortage of shops, which leads to queues and phenomena normally associated with a shortage of goods. Thus, shops tend to become exceedingly crowded, and shopping is much more exhausting than in Britain. Any delivery of goods to the home costs extra.

(*e*) Certain essential goods are hard to come by. Such everyday necessities as sewing needles and kettles were very scarce. Because of their better quality foreign made goods are in great demand. The delegates learned that whenever Polish textiles arrive they will draw large crowds, and the same was said to be true of Czech shoes.[1]

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[1] *Cf.* Footnote 4 on page 324.

(*f*) In all price comparisons which we have made the Soviet article was almost certainly of a poorer quality than the British. The lowest Moscow qualities are simply not to be found in Britain, nor the highest British qualities in Moscow.

(*g*) The parents have to buy the text books and stationery needed for all schoolchildren.[2]

It is, perhaps, necessary here to draw attention to another qualification the import of which—in one direction or the other—cannot be judged. All our data in this article refer only to the here and now: they cannot indicate trends. Changes in the British standard of living are measurable, because in many essential respects, reliable statistics are available. Changes in the Russian standard of living are not thus measurable. Sufficiently detailed data that can be checked by outsiders are not forthcoming. The British standard of living has risen steadily over the decades and has continued to do so since the war. The Russian standard of living has certainly improved since the war and the great crop failure of 1946: so much is agreed by all Communist and non-Communist observers. But no really comparable material is available for previous periods.[3]

6. CONCLUSION

It will be asked: how do the many families with monthly incomes of 1000 roubles and less manage to live in present-day Moscow? Obviously, unless they consist of only two or three persons, they will be quite unable to afford anything so 'luxurious' as the very austere Moscow 'human needs' diet outlined in Table I. However, take away from this diet all the foods that, for an English person, would make the diet at all edible—the rationed foods (except a little tea and fat), and such relatively expensive items as dried fruit and jam—and replace the calories thus lost by the cheapest carbohydrate foods, and the cost of the diet is reduced by about two-fifths.[4] Something of this kind is probably the remedy applied by the working-class family with several dependent children and old parents. On the other hand, luxuries large and small are made and sold in Russia, and some of the minor ones are certainly quite within the reach of an exceptionally well paid worker with no or few dependents; but the masses are very poor by western standards, and the great luxuries are reserved—as everywhere—for the rich.[1] The average working-class family can afford little family life; husband and wife will be working each their 48 hours per week in factories, while their children are being looked after in a crèche or, very often, by the grandmother living with the family. Even with both parents thus working, a Moscow family will rarely attain the standard of living enjoyed by an English working-class family in which only the husband is the bread winner while the wife devotes herself solely to her family.

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[1] *Cf.*, also, *'Ifs' of a Russian Housewife* (*The Sunday Times*, Sept. 21st, 1952), the translation of a letter by a Russian housewife to the trade-union newspaper 'Trud'.

[2] School fees have to be paid for classes 8 to 10 (ages 15 to 17 years) and for higher education.

[3] *Cf.* however, N. Jasny, The Soviet Economy in the Plan Era, ch. 4. H. Schwartz, Russia's Soviet Economy, p. 461. G. Barker, Birmingham University Research Bulletin, No. 6.

[4] And the purchasing power of the rouble for food raised from 3d. to 4d. or, possibly, even 5d. The formula underlying our calculations of the cost of food in Moscow and in England in TableI, is $\frac{\Sigma p_m q_e}{\Sigma p_e q_e}$, where m stands for Moscow and e for England. Were we to use instead $\frac{\Sigma p_m q_m}{\Sigma p_e q_m}$ with reference to actual Moscow diets we should be substituting not merely with respect to the quality of specific foodstuffs, as in Table I, but making a wholesale replacement of more expensive foods by the cheapest sources of energy: black bread, coarse cereals, and potatoes. These—relatively to English prices—were less dear in Moscow than other foods. Hence this changing of the weights would result in a figure of purchasing power of the rouble higher than 3d. These cheap energy foods would be very inferior to similar English foods, from a culinary point of view; but just this fact—that they contain much of the husks of the grain, and that the potatoes are utilized literally down to the peel—does make them a completer food than their more refined English counterparts.

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[1] Some prices of luxuries and of necessities are listed in Appendix B.

T. Schulz.
P. Wiles.

APPENDIX A—HOUSING

It is difficult to be at all precise about housing conditions : not only are there (as usual) no published figures, but the variety is so infinite that very much more work is required than in collecting prices. The following few instances were collected by the delegation :

- (*a*) Old wooden slum : 5 in 1 room, 4 in 1 room. These two families and a third share the kitchen, which is filthy and very ill lit. Both living rooms clean, people seem better dressed than slum dwellers. Head of one family earns R.800 per month.
- (*b*) Brick house : 5 in 2 rooms. Head of family fairly well dressed. Kitchen and lavatory shared with other families.
- (*c*) 2 in 1 room, share washing, cooking and lavatory facilities with 4 other tenants. Head of family a minor engineer.
- (*d*) New block of flats. 2 in 2 living rooms, bathroom and kitchen. Head of family an architect.
- (*e*) 4 in 3 rooms, 2 of them large rooms. Head of family earns R.5,000 per month.
- (*f*) 2 in 3 rooms plus kitchen. Head of family high grade engineer, wife does not work.
- (*g*) The outskirts of Moscow are full of wooden huts about 14 by 20 feet. There are a very large number of these indeed, and they contain 1 family apiece. Call a household 5 persons, and define that hut as 2 rooms : 5 in 2 rooms.
- (*h*) A collective farm visited was housed precisely as in (*g*).
- (*i*) Notice board of rooms wanted in the nearby provincial town of Kalinin : single rooms were wanted for 2, 3 and 4 persons respectively.

(*j*) View of countryside from car on way to Kalinin: most collective farms as in (*g*), a few with bigger huts. The small town of Klin appears to consist very largely of huts as in (*g*).

The last three instances are merely confirmatory, as in this paper we are considering only Moscow. It appeared from what the delegation were told that overcrowding in Moscow is somewhat worse than in the countryside or the other towns of U.S.S.R., excepting the war-devastated areas. We are perhaps on safe ground in inferring from the above evidence that at least two-thirds of the *households* of Moscow live at a density of more than 2 persons per room (the proportion of the *population* so housed would be somewhat greater). We define a room as in the British census: all bedrooms, living rooms, and unshared kitchens, but not lavatories, bathrooms, etc.

A comparable figure for Britain may be derived from the 1 per cent sample of the 1951 Census, p. 140. The percentage of households in the conurbations of Britain housed at a density of more than 2 per room is 2.54. The highest percentage is found in the conurbation of Glasgow: 15.6.

APPENDIX B

Moscow Prices of Miscellaneous Goods and Services

	Roubles		Roubles
Gas (per m^3)	0.20	Concert admission	12.00–25.00
Electricity (per Kwh)	0.40	Circus admission	10.00–18.00
Coal (per ton)	200.00	Football admission	15.00–25.00
Candles (per ℔)	8.17	Vodka (standard bottle)	12.00–27.50
Paraffin (per gallon)	3.36	Cigarettes (20)	6.50
Dry Cleaning, Man's Overcoat	48.00	Tobacco (per oz.)	2.46– 5.31
Tram Fare	0.30	Sweets (per ℔)	5.64–40.86
Metro Fare	0.50	Chocolate (good quality, per ℔)	73.55–81.72
Telephone (local charge)	0.15	Cocoa (per ℔)	73.09
Letter in U.S.S.R.	0.30	Coffee (per ℔)	29.06
Notepaper (25 sheets)	2.00	Bedroom suite (walnut)	12500.00
Envelopes (25)	2.00	Piano, Upright	4320.00
School Exercise Book	0.96	Do., Grand	8730.00
School Text Book	4.94	Motor Car (cheapest)	8500.00
Cinema Seat	3.00– 6.00	Do. (dearest)	80000.00
Theatre Seat	5.00–35.00		

DOCKWORKERS' EARNINGS

This article is based on statistics of the employment and earnings of dockworkers since 1942, *which have very kindly been provided by the National Dock Labour Board. The Board is, of course, in no way responsible for the use made of the material.*

I. DECASUALISATION

(*a*) *Historical development*

Dock labour is an outstanding example of casual employment. Casual labouring means casual payment, and such insecure and unattractive work was, historically, the last resort of 'the failure in every branch of life, professional, commercial, and industrial.'[1] Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, in the interests of social progress, attempts have been made to achieve greater regularity of work at the docks. Before considering the earnings structure of the industry, we must briefly examine the steps taken to decasualise employment which have culminated in the present Scheme administered by the National Dock Labour Board.

In the past a man might be engaged for only an hour or two's work,[2] and then paid off. Men normally employed in other industries competed freely with those wholly dependent on the docks. Therefore, too many men used to present themselves at the docks each day, and the ordinary docker had little hope of consistent employment even if the flow of shipping had been steady. Furthermore, most dockers worked for several employers.

The first registration schemes were inaugurated at Liverpool in 1912 and at Bristol in 1916; and, following the report in 1920 of the Shaw Court of Inquiry which declared registration the first essential for regulating labour conditions at the docks, efforts were made to establish registers of permanent dockworkers in nearly all British ports. But although the number of men registered was generally far in excess of requirements,[3] unregistered men were often employed. Employers agreed to give priority of employment to registered dockers ; but, even so, being on the register in 1939 was in no sense equivalent to being ' on the books ' of an employer in any other industry. By the end of the second war, however, the dockers' position had become much more like that of other workers. Compulsory registration of dockers and employers had been introduced in 1940, but this alone did not ensure decasualisation. In 1941 the Ministry of War Transport became responsible for the employment of all dockworkers on the Mersey and the Clyde—the employers acting as contractors on its behalf. A little later, under government pressure, the National Dock Labour Corporation Limited (representative of employers and men) took over elsewhere, and allocated dockworkers to the registered employers. Thus dockworkers were brought on to ‘ the books ’ of one or other of these bodies, and they received attendance money (at the rate of 7s. 6d. a turn in Ministry ports, and 6s. in Corporation ports) provided that they attended for work at all the normal times.

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[1] Llewellyn Smith and Nash, *The Story of the Dockers' Strike* (1889), p. 24. At that time the labour force was said to have included the sons of a baronet, as well as a peer who had achieved notoriety by his unsuccessful wooing of a barmaid.

[2] There was no minimum period until the 4-hour ' turn ' of work was established in 1919. Before then, dockers were generally employed on an hourly basis like many labourers in other occupations.

[3] ' It is estimated that (under the pre-war system) the total number of dock workers who looked to the docks for their main source of employment, was 95,000, while the present labour force is 75,000, but in comparing these figures the better utilisation of labour achieved by decasualisation and the decline in the volume of overseas imports since 1938 must be taken into account.' *Report of the Working Party on the Turn-Round of Shipping in the U.K. Ports*, 1948.

The Ministry of War Transport and Dock Labour Corporation schemes were prolonged after the end of the war, to allow time for a single decasualisation scheme to be worked out by both sides of the industry—failing that, one was to be imposed by the Minister of Labour. The two sides could not agree. The employers contended that since the payment of the guaranteed wage would be their responsibility, it was logical that they should determine the number of men to whom it should be paid.[1] For, they argued, in no other industry did the workers have a say on how many men were to be employed at particular establishments. They opposed joint administration on the ground that it had already proved unworkable as, even though reductions in the registers had been agreed upon in principle, the Corporation had been unable to put them into practice.

In the event the employers' objections were overruled and they were obliged to enter the new joint body, the National Dock Labour Board, set up in mid-1947. The Local Boards, set up to administer the Scheme in each port area, took over the registers used in wartime with few changes—apart from the inevitable reductions at Mersey and Clyde ports, which had handled an abnormal amount of tonnage during the war. The Local Boards were also required to take back dockers who had been away on national service, but relatively few claimed reinstatement.[2]

The object of setting up the National and Local Boards was ‘ to ensure greater regularity of employment of dockworkers and to secure that an adequate number of dockworkers is available for the efficient performance of dock work.’ However, in many ports the registers were larger than efficiency required. In 1948, labour surpluses actually exceeded 12,000 men a day at certain periods; nevertheless fewer than 500 were discharged as redundant. Every six months the National Board determines a ‘ sanctioned strength ’ for each port area; where the registers are above this level they are allowed to run down by natural wastage. Between September 1948 and November 1949 recruitment was virtually stopped, and the registers declined. They rose slightly in 1950, and considerably in 1951.

From the point of view of efficiency, this method of reducing the registers has had certain disadvantages. Until the end of 1950 it was difficult for young men to enter the industry (very difficult, unless they were the sons of dockworkers), and so the average age of dockworkers has remained high.[1] In 1950 more than half the daily workers were over 45 and nearly one-sixth were over 60. It is understandable that joint administration should have led to this ' conservative ' policy; for the Unions could scarcely compromise in view of the naturally militant attitude of the rank and file on redundancy. As a result, individual dockworkers have, despite underemployment, become less liable to dismissal than workers in most industries.

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[1] *Port Transport Industry* : *Report of Inquiry under Dock Workers* (*Regulation of Employment*), *Act*, 1946.

[2] Readmissions to the London register after 1945 totalled only 674. In 1919, demobilisation had led to a flooding of the ports by unemployed workers ; the Port of London Registration Committee registered some 61,000 workers, of whom only 34,000 were needed daily.

(*b*) *Registration*

As is explained below, the registration of workers differs according to their terms of employment (daily, weekly, or temporary); but all men on the Workers' Register are included on (i) a Live Register of men available for work, *or* (ii) a Suspense Register of men temporarily not available because on holiday, sick, or on strike, *or* (iii) a Dormant Register of men not available for longer periods owing to sickness.[2] (Each of these national Registers, of course, consists of the corresponding registers in the individual port areas). Some of the largest changes in the numbers on the Workers' Register (Tables I and II) have been due solely to changes in definition. Thus the reduction in 1948 was almost entirely due to the combing-out of the Dormant Register, and there was very little decline in the total number of men on the Live Register actually seeking work at the docks. Men who had been off work for two years or more were removed from the Dormant Register and put on a Special List if it was anticipated that they would return; they then ceased to count against the strength of the port, and could be replaced if necessary.

The Workers' Register covers daily and weekly workers regularly employed at the docks. In order to allow some flexibility, additional daily workers may be taken on temporarily—with National Board authority—to meet seasonal or special demands on particular ports. Men on the Temporary Register are treated similarly to those on the Main Register, except that they cease to be registered when they are no longer required. The maximum number of men on the Temporary Register at any time in 1951 was 2,564. The use of non-registered men for ' peaks of short duration ' is also permitted; the average daily employment under this head rose to 292 in 1951 from 112 in 1950. Most of these were men recruited for very short periods, but a few were ' listed weekly workers ' (*i.e.* unregistered men employed by registered employers, who may use them for dock work with the approval of the Local Board). A small number of the weekly workers on the Main Register consists of specialised workers on Limited Registration (which terminates when the need for their services ends).

[1] Unlike other workers, dockers apparently expect to stay at work until they die. At present local agreements fixing the age of retirement operate only at Hull, Plymouth, the South Wales ports, and among coal trimmers at Methil (East Scotland) and the Tyne ports.

[2] Originally, the Dormant Register also included men temporarily working in other industries. Now, men who leave the industry have no right to reinstatement.

TABLE I

Numbers on N.D.L.B. Registers, 1947–51

(based on figures for last week of year)

	1947	*1951*	*Net change*
Daily Workers:			
Main Register	68,449	67,075	*—1,374*
Temporary Register	—	1,244	+1,244
Total daily workers	68,449	68,319	— *130*
Weekly workers:			
Normal Register	11,320	12,756	+1,436
Limited Register	. .	1,255[1]	+1,255
Total weekly workers	11,320	14,011	+2,691
All workers:			
Live and Suspense Register	74,831	81,021	+6,190
Dormant Register	4,938	1,309	*—3,629*
Workers' Register	79,769	82,330	+2,561

. . Not available.

[1] There are no figures of the Limited Register before 1951, despite the existence of this classification.

TABLE II

Annual Changes in Registers, 1947–51

(based on figures for last week of year)

	1948	*1949*	*1950*	*1951*	*Total net changes*
A. *Live, Suspense and Dormant Registers*					
Daily workers:					
Main Register	*—4,337*	*—1,750*	+326	+4,387	*—1,374*
Temporary Register ...	—	+460	*—220*	+1,004	+1,244
Total daily workers ...	*—4,337*	*—1,290*	+106	+5,391	*—130*
Weekly workers:					
Normal Register	+377	+331	+901	*—173*	+1,436
Limited Register	. .	. .	. .	(+1,255)[1]	+1,255
Total weekly workers ...	+377	+331	+901	+1,082	+2,691
All workers:					
Live and Suspense Register	*—327*	*—856*	+1,092	+6,281	+6,190
Dormant Register ...	*—3,633*	*—103*	— *85*	+192	*—3,629*
Workers' Register[2] ...	*—3,960*	*—959*	+1,007	+6,473	+2,561
B. *Live Register only*					
Daily workers	*—772*	*—887*	*—609*	+5,390	+3,122
Weekly workers	+259	+388	+616	+1,154	+2,417
Total	*—513*	*—499*	+7	+6,544	+5,539

. . Not available.

[1] There are no figures of the Limited Register before 1951, despite the existence of this classification.

The Register of weekly workers has increased each year since 1947; and at the end of 1951 the total was nearly 24 per cent higher than in December 1947—which suggests that employers have found it increasingly advantageous to employ their own men despite the existence of the pool of labour under the Scheme.

The total register of daily workers (who alone feature in the earnings statistics we are considering) was still a fraction lower than in 1947—in spite of the inclusion of 1,244 men on the Temporary Register, which did not exist in 1947. Most of the decline in the Main Register of daily workers was however due to the combing-out of the Dormant Register already referred to. By the end of 1951, the nunber of daily workers available for employment—*i.e.* on the Live Register—had actually risen by 3,122 (Table II, B). This increase of around 5 per cent was however, only about one-fifth of the rate of increase in the number of weekly workers; and it occurred entirely in 1951. The number of daily workers on the Live Register at the end of December had dropped each year until 1951, when it rose by 5,390—*i.e.* by some 8 per cent. This sudden rise had important repercussions on earnings at the beginning of 1952.[1]

Registration is of immediate benefit to daily workers on the Main Register —by far the largest group of dockworkers. Regularly weekly workers in any case enjoy much the same position as workers in other industries, and (apart from the specialised workers on the Limited Registers) they can claim the same benefits as daily workers on the Main Register, if they cease to be employed as weekly workers.

Under the existing Scheme, daily workers (whether on the Main or Temporary Registers) perform two distinct services: (i) work, which is by its nature irregular; (ii) regular attendance on call. Both these services now command payment. For the first, the men receive wages and overtime payments, paid by the employers but through the Board's offices. For the second they receive a sum of attendance money in respect of each ' turn ' when work is not available,[2] and the guarantee of a certain minimum weekly payment. Wages, attendance money, and the sums paid under the guarantee can therefore be taken roughly to correspond with earnings in other industries.

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[1] See p. 350.

[2] *I.e.* when they have ' proved attendance '. In most ports there are eleven 4-hour turns of work in each week—one in the morning and one in the afternoon of each week-day except Saturday (when only a morning turn is worked). There is one ' call ' for each turn. In the few ports where shift working is the rule, a full shift is treated as equivalent to two turns. Most men under 65, except the unfit, are guaranteed the standard weekly minimum for a week of eleven turns. They receive 5s. attendance money for each turn at which they do not get work, and, provided they have attended, or been excused attendance, at all the normal calls, they also receive Guarantee Make-up to bring their week's wages up to 88s. should the wages have fallen below this figure. Sums earned outside the normal week (*i.e.*, in most cases, between midday Saturday and midnight Sunday) are not set against this guarantee. In some circumstances of overtime or shift work, a docker may be excused attendance the following day, the guarantee being unbroken by this excused absence. The unfit and older men (up to 69), who are guaranteed a smaller weekly minimum, and qualify for attendance money at less than the full eleven turns, are excused attendance at other turns.

(*c*) *Finance*

Attendance money and guarantee make-up (*i.e.* any sums necessary to bring each docker's earnings, including both overtime payments during the week and any attendance money, up to the guaranteed weekly minimum) are paid—amongst other things—by the Board out of a levy on the employers. This levy is charged at certain percentage rates on their total wage bills under various heads (*i.e.* for daily workers, daily workers on coastal traffic, and weekly workers)[1]. A large part of the proceeds are however used to cover items such as Holiday Pay, National Insurance, Travel Allowances, and Administrative Expenses, which the employers would have to pay even if there were no decasualisation scheme. In 1950 the levy on the employers totalled £3,945,000, and in 1951 £3,683,000; the amounts paid out by the Board in Attedance Money and Guarantee Make-up totalled only £1,058,000 and £710,000 respectively, so that even assuming that a large share of the Administrative and General Expenses was incurred in this connection, decasualisation would have cost only about one-third and one-quarter respectively[2] of the employers' total contributions in 1950 and 1951. Had there been no such decasualisation scheme, many more underemployed dockers would have been a charge on National Insurance.[3]

II. THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF WAGES AND EARNINGS

(*a*) *Available statistics*

The N.D.L.B., like its predecessors, produces quarterly statistics of the average weekly earnings of registered daily workers on its payrolls[4]—that is,

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[1] Recently these percentages have been set as follows :—

	Mar. '49- June '50	July '50- Dec. '50	Jan. '51- April '51	May '51- April '52	May '52- July '52	Aug. '52- Oct. '52	Nov. '52
Daily workers on work other than coastal traffic ...	15	15	13½	11	13½	16½	22½
Daily workers on coastal traffic ...		10	9	7½	9	11½	15
Weekly workers ...	5	5	3	3	4	5	5

(Welfare appropriations, which are included in these figures, in each case amounted to ½ per cent of the wages bill.)

The percentages levied were thus twice reduced in 1951 as the higher volume of employment and increased rates of pay promised to bring payments substantially above estimated expenditure. But in 1952 the Board was faced with large labour surpluses, and was compelled to raise the percentage rates three times ; so that the main levy is now near 25 per cent—the statutory maximum which cannot be exceeded without the consent of the Minister of Transport.

[2] See *N.D.L.B. Annual Report and Accounts, 1951*, Appendix 6. The cost might have been lower on the employers' proposals. They argued that regular attendance was a reasonable *quid pro quo* for a guaranteed weekly minimum, and that there should be no attendance money, which a docker can draw even when his total earnings are high. The dockers however contended that attendance money was their due reward for presenting themselves for work at given times ; and since this principle had in effect been conceded in both the wartime schemes, it would have been very difficult to abolish attendance money under the new scheme.

[3] The question of a lower employers' contribution to take account of this has been raised with the Ministry of Labour, but the principle has not been conceded.

[4] The numbers on the Payrolls fall below the total of daily workers on the Main and Temporary Registers by the numbers of men earning nothing (*i.e.* sick or on strike for the whole week), and exceed the total Live Register of daily workers by the number of men on annual leave (included on the Suspense Registers) and by small numbers of men who have gone sick and been placed on the Suspense Registers during the week. Non-registered workers are not included in the earnings statistics.

those who during the week draw any pay, any Wages, Attendance Money, Guarantee Make-up, Holiday Pay, or Travel Time Allowances. Wages, plus any attendance money and guarantee make-up, roughly correspond to earnings in other industries, but the averages per man on the payroll given in Table III include men wholly without work or on holiday, who would not usually figure on an industrial payroll in a week selected for an enquiry into earnings.[1] Thus the available earnings statistics for the docks are cast in a different form from those for other industries. This is due partly to the peculiar conditions of dock labour, and partly also to the fact that the overall statistics are collected by the national and local Boards and not by the firms for whom the men actually work. Naturally each Board can collect only such statistics as relate to its functions under the Scheme, and has to obtain any other figures it may desire from the individual employers or from the Unions. Moreover, it has not the same occasion or opportunity as an ordinary employer to study questions such as rates of pay and hours of work.

TABLE III

Average Weekly Earnings (shillings) of Daily Workers on Payrolls

	Wages	*Earnings* (Wages, Attendance Money, and Guarantee Make-up)	*Gross Earnings* (Earnings, Holiday Pay, and Travel Time Allowances)
1942 (2nd half)	110	126	130[1]
1943	132[2]	143	146[1]
1944	148	158	160[1]
1945	132	143	146
1946	123	136[3]	140
1947 (1st half)	137	145	149
1947 (2nd half)	147	153	158
1948	146	155	160
1949	157	164	169
1940	161	168	173
1951	187	191	197
1952 (1st qr.)	(187)	(186)	(196)

[1] Including estimate of Holiday Pay in M.O.W.T. ports.
[2] Estimated, as only earnings figures are available for M.O.W.T. ports.
[3] Including Travel Time Allowances.

The Board has also produced, but only comparatively recently, figures of average wages per man receiving wages. Unlike averages per man on the payrolls, these exclude men wholly unemployed; but like the former they vary sharply with changes in the extent of underemployment—*i.e.* in the average number of idle turns falling among men who draw some wages each week. Neither set of figures, therefore, gives a reliable picture of movements, or of local differences, in average earnings or wages for a full working week of eleven turns. Nor would it be possible to get a picture of such movements and differences by studying actual piece rates laid down at different times and in different areas, even if detailed information were available.

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[1] It must however be borne in mind that in other industries men on the firm's books may occasionally be temporarily surplus; though there is no measure of underemployment as there is in the docks. Elsewhere such surplus workers are probably paid sums nearer their normal wages, and underemployment has less effect on earnings.

(*b*) *The piece rate system*

Since 1919, when piecework payment was extended to most British ports with the aim of improving turn-round so as to overcome the post-war shortage of shipping, most dockworkers have earned piece rates. In Liverpool, however, where piecework nominally applies, nearly all work is in fact paid for at time rates; but, even allowing for this, probably more than 80 per cent of all daily workers are paid piece rates.

Apart from the special case of rates paid to coal trimmers,[1] there are no national rates for particular cargoes, nor is there any national co-ordination of piece rate scales in the different ports. The Unions have always insisted that there should be complete autonomy in settling piece rates in each port, since the speed of stowing or discharging which can be achieved is as much determined by the facilities of the port—not only internal facilities such as the layout of berths and the state of equipment, cranes, trucks, etc., but also the transport facilities for moving goods away or bringing goods in for shipment—as by the type of cargo and shipping handled. Again, exports need to be stowed in the correct order according to the type of cargo or destination, and discharging imports does not usually require the same care as stowage. Piece rates therefore remain a matter of agreement between employers' and dockers' representatives in the particular port. In each port there is usually an agreed schedule[2] for many goods, and if this is considered to be seriously out of line with those elsewhere the question may be referred to the National Joint Council for the Port Transport Industry. But the diversity of commodities is so great that in practice difficulties are always liable to arise in applying the scheduled rates. Moreover since the speed of stowing and discharging may vary sharply between ships of different design, or according to the method of stowage or state of the cargo after the voyage, many claims for increased rates must be settled on the spot as they arise.[3]

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[1] Covered by the *National Coal Trimming Tariff*, which was agreed between the Shipping Federation and the National Transport Workers' Federation in 1920 and last revised in 1947.

[2] In London, however, piece rate schedules are agreed separately with most of the six different groups of employers (the ocean shipowners, operating the deep-sea lines ; the employers in the short sea trades ; the wharfingers ; the master stevedores, who contract for shipwork to other employers ; the coaling organisations ; and the master lightermen). 'There appears to be little uniformity in the matter of rate fixing, and it is quite possible for work on the same commodity to be paid at several different rates in different parts of the port.' (*Unofficial Stoppages in the London Docks* ; *Report of a Committee of Inquiry*, May 1951).

[3] A few examples, also taken from the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Unofficial Stoppages in the London Docks, gives an impression of the many circumstances which may give rise to a demand for added payment. 'The following is a random selection from cases which actually occurred during the period July to October, 1950, and resulted in extra payments being made to the men concerned :

Discharge of antimony ore in badly torn bags.

Discharge of dry hides, awkwardly stowed behind cargo destined for Liverpool.

Discharge of phosphate rock in bulk which had become wet through a leak in the ship's plates.

Working of cargo from deep tanks which were warm and awkward to work.

This means that dockworkers can take advantage of particular circumstances to press for higher rates without at once coming up against the broader issues of industry-wide negotiation.

Many more factors enter into the fixing of piece rates for a particular cargo in a given port than for a particular machine job in a factory, and in the docks piece rates probably have less incentive effect. In a factory there are generally few obstacles to rapid working, and the worker, even when he is free to set his own pace, is liable to be taken off a machine if he works too slowly. But in the docks not only are certain interruptions of work unavoidable, but—partly owing to the nature of the work and partly owing to the solidarity of dockers—if men choose to work slowly the employer is less able to remedy the situation.[1] Complaints have been made[2] that in these circumstances the piece rate system positively encourages dockers to cling to their restrictive practices and to waste time during the normal turns, so as to leave more work to be done at overtime rates.

(*c*) *Minimum piece rates and the minimum time rate*

The structure (but not of course the actual level) of piece rates remains similar to that of pre-war piece rates in most ports. A minimum is set by the provision that piece rates paid in any turn may not fall below the national minimum time rate per turn. Moreover since 1937 increases in the national minimum time rate have been reflected in basic piece rates, as a result of national agreements : the basic schedules of piece rates at each port being augmented by standard increases. Thus, between 1937 and 1945, it was laid down that pieceworkers should receive the same additional sums as might be added to the national minimum time rate per day. Pieceworkers benefited more from this system than did timeworkers, since piecework earnings were, in fact, considerably higher—thanks to special incentive bonuses, etc.—than they would have been under the basic 1937 schedules. By 1945 the national minimum time rate had risen by 4s. a day above the 1937 level, and pieceworkers were consequently receiving this 4s. in addition to their piecework earnings. It was then decided to consolidate this into the piece rate

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[1] A dockworker who fails to comply with an order can be subjected to discipline only if the employer reports him in writing to the local Board. They may disentitle him to attendance money for a given period, suspend him without pay for up to 7 days, give him 7 days' notice, or dismiss him summarily. (See paras. 14, 15 and 16 of the *Dock Workers* (*Regulation of Employment*) *Scheme*, 1947).

[2] *Cf. Manchester Guardian*, March 18th, 1952.

Work on consignment of cotton seed cake in bags, awkwardly stowed, in which flies and insects had bred.

Consignment of drums of formaldehyde, some of which had leaked during voyage, filling the hatch with fumes which caused discomfort to the men while at work.

Discharge of sugar, where part of other stowed cargo had to be shifted to get working way.

Consignment of maize meal, stowed in paper bags in a bad condition, which had to be re-bagged in hessian.

Discharge of copper ingots shot loose in the hold.

Discharge of bags of figs in a sticky condition.

Work on consignment of 250 tons of spelter, above which was stowed 100 tons of peanut butter. Heat from the ship's propellor shaft had melted the butter, which had run on to the spelter making discharge difficult.'

structure, and to provide for automatic adjustments thereafter, by raising the piece rate schedules by 5 per cent of their 1937 level for every shilling increase in the minimum time rate per day. The minimum time rate had remained stationary between 1945 and 1951; but, although in consequence basic piece rate schedules also remained unchanged, pieceworkers had succeeded in obtaining increases in the actual rates paid for particular cargoes (for example by securing new, or higher, additions for particular types of ship, more dirty money, higher incentive bonuses, etc.). Thus the increases in the minimum time rate per day in 1951 (2s.) and in February 1952 (1s. 6d.) had the effect of bringing timeworkers' earnings[1] more into line with those of pieceworkers; because the increases granted in basic piece rates probably did little more than recognise the advances which had already taken place in practice.

The extreme complexity of piece rates in the docks would make it impossible in any case to explain movements or local differences in earnings by reference to actual rates. One can however show how far such differences are due to variations in the degree of employment, by relating earnings and wages to the numbers of men proving attendance at different times and in different areas. By these means an attempt is also made later in this article to draw some sort of conclusions concerning hours worked.

(*d*) *The effects of underemployment*

The degree of employment among dockers is determined by the activity at the docks, and by the number of men on the registers seeking work. The index of the tonnage of shipping arrivals and departures with cargo (both in the foreign and coasting trade) provides a rough and ready indication of the trend of activity at the docks since 1946.[2] Graph I shows that between 1946 and 1951–2 the aggregate wages paid to dockers rose in very much the same proportion as the total volume of shipping passing through British ports. In the last four quarters shown, both the tonnage of shipping and the aggregate wages were about 45 per cent higher than the average for 1947, the year when the N.D.L.B. was established. But between these dates the curves diverge, both annually and seasonally. If we compare the general rate of increase (ignoring seasonal fluctuations) in each, then wage bills rose more slowly then the volume of shipping between 1947 and 1948 and between 1948 and 1949, kept in step between 1949 and 1950, and went up considerably faster in 1951. The reason why wage bills caught up with shipping in 1951 may be that this was a period when many ports were working near capacity—as in 1947, when the same was true because many ports were

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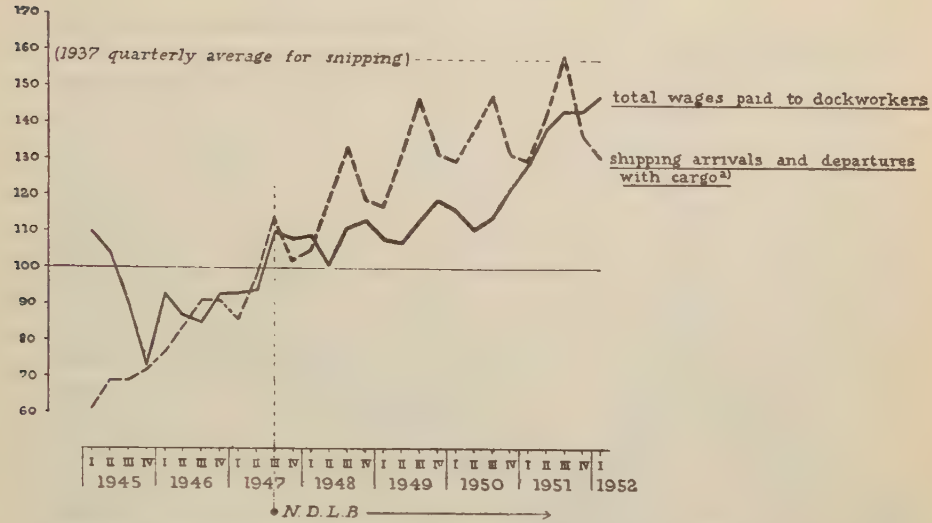
[1] The minimum time rate, which was 66s. a week in 1937, had risen to 88s. by 1945. In that year it was raised to 104s. 6d., in 1951 to 115s. 6d., and in February 1952 to 123s. 9d.

[2] But not of the comparison with the pre-war position, owing to post-war changes such as the higher ratio of exports to imports, the larger proportion of manufactured exports, fuller loading of ships, and possibly less double counting through ships calling at several ports.

I. Shipping movements and dockworkers' wage bills

(Indices: quarterly average 1947 = 100)

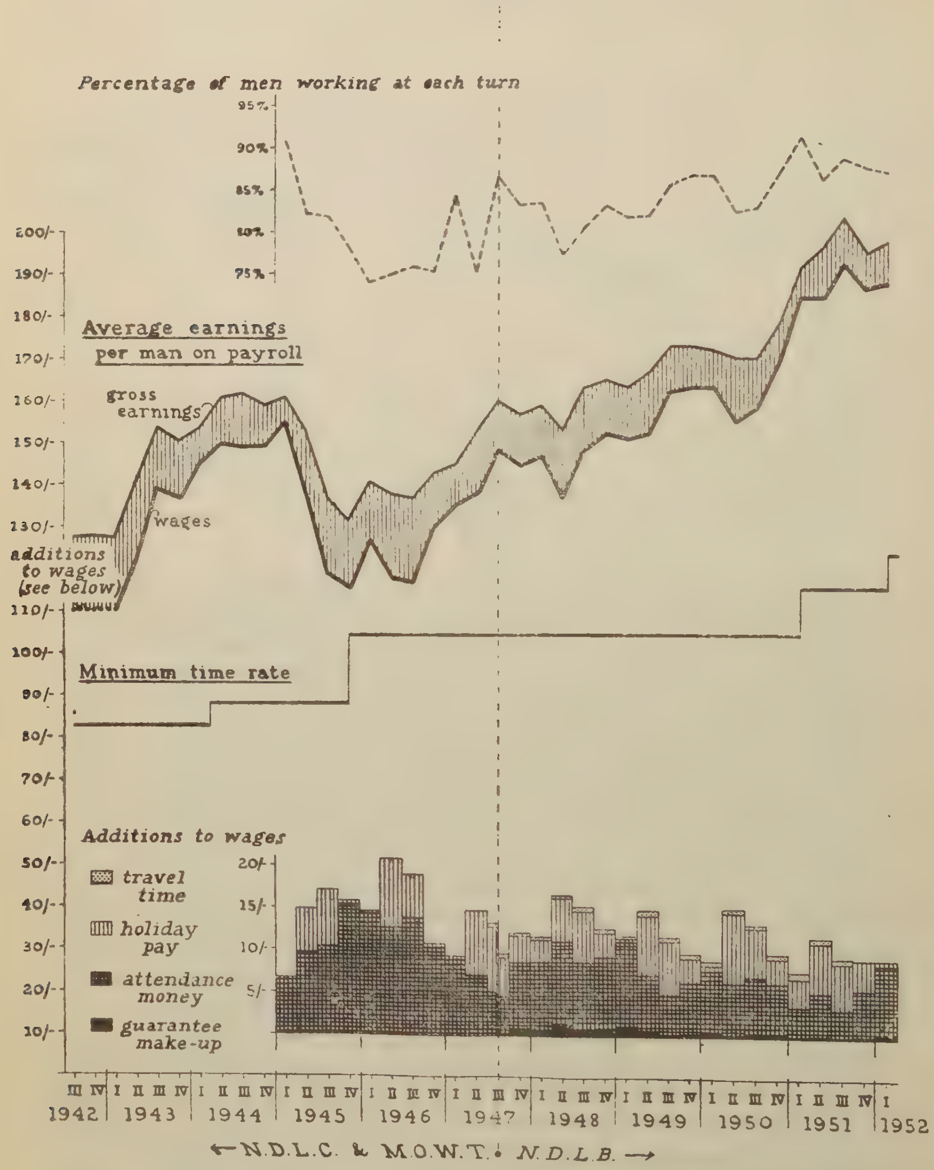


restricted, and shipping movements dislocated, by war damage. Shipping may also have tended to be more fully loaded in these two periods. Between 1947 and 1950, however, an improvement in the utilisation of dock labour (partly due to a better spread of shipping between ports) probably made it possible for larger tonnages of imports and exports to be handled by a declining total labour force, with only a slight increase in aggregate wage bills.

Because of the declining numbers, average wages per man on the payroll were of course rising rather faster than aggregate wage bills between 1947 and mid-1950 (Graph II). That this rise was connected with an increasing volume of work per man is indicated by the top line of Graph II, which shows how the percentage of men working each turn was rising after 1945. The close fit between this curve and the average wages curve between the end of 1947 and the end of 1950 suggests that the variations in average wages were largely accounted for by variations in average hours worked, so that at this time piece rates can have been increasing only slightly on the average.

Throughout the period since 1945 the major movements in average weekly gross earnings and wages as given in the N.D.L.B. (or N.D.L.C. and M.O.W.T.) statistics seem to have been determined mainly by changes in the number of men off work each turn through unemployment or holidays. Comparable figures are not available for the war years; but activity at the docks was at a very low level in the second half of 1942, when the first earnings statistics of the N.D.L.C. and the M.O.W.T. for their respective ports show that average gross earnings amounted to only £6 8s. a week. Earnings rose practically continuously, however, between then and mid-1944: the build-up

II. Average earnings & employment of dockworkers, 1942-52[a]



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[a] For details of gross earnings by port areas, see Appendix A.

for the second front, and the invasion itself, greatly increased the traffic at the docks. At their wartime peak in the second and third quarters of 1944, average gross earnings exceeded £8 a week.

During 1945 and the first quarter of 1946, the proportion of men idle each turn almost trebled, as the military work on which dockers had largely been engaged dwindled and the flow of ordinary shipping was still a mere trickle. Although the latter was increasing, aggregate wage bills fell by nearly 40 per cent during 1945, as Graph I shows, and average wages dropped to almost the same level as during the worst days of the war. This formed the background to the 1945 wave of strikes. Since that time all the principal movements in average earnings (or wages) have coincided with marked changes in the degree of underemployment; the effects of changes in the foreign trade situation are also clearly indicated in both curves of Graph II.

Activity increased between mid-1946 and the summer of 1947, as trade began to recover from the war, and imports (particularly those from Europe) rose partly because other countries were anxious to earn sterling just before it promised to become convertible. After convertibility became manifestly impossible, and this had precipitated the 1947 balance-of-payments crisis and import cuts, dockworkers' wages tended to decline until the second quarter of 1948. The position improved however during the period of increasing imports and the building up of stocks before devaluation, and by the autumn of 1949 the degree of underemployment was about the same as before the 1947 crisis, while average gross weekly earnings were about 13s. higher, and average wages about 15s. higher, than at that time. Underemployment again increased, and average wages declined as imports (especially of raw materials) fell off after devaluation.

But the greater part of the increase in wage bills, and in average earnings and wages, since the setting up of the N.D.L.B. occurred after 1950. The sharper rate of increase in wage bills was due to the fact that the total number of turns being worked at the docks was now rising, whereas it had been falling after 1947. The number of men actually at work each turn dropped sharply in 1948 and was still lower in 1950 than in 1947. The percentage of men proving attedance would have been heavier during these years but for the fact that men were drifting away from the docks and, as recruitment was halted,[1] natural wastage was not being made good—so that payrolls were declining. By contrast, the number of daily workers actually working rose by 15 per cent between the third quarter of 1950 and the third quarter of 1951—mainly because, to remedy labour shortages, the registers in London, Liverpool and elsewhere were expanded by about 5,000 workers during 1951. The shortage of labour improved the dockworkers' bargaining position and may have helped them to secure the increases in the minimum time rate shown in Graph II. These in turn may have had their effect in raising piece rates and so maintaining average wages in spite of the drop in the percentage of men working each turn after the first quarter of 1951. Towards the end of the year and in the first quarter of 1952 the increase in the number of men registered helped to maintain wage bills in spite of the drop in shipping movements (Graph I).

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[1] See p. 328.

(*e*) *Estimated changes in piece rates*

Since some of the most striking changes in average wages arose through changes in the number of hours worked in the normal turns (*i.e.* changes in the number of hours lost through unemployment or holidays), it seems clear that piece rates were more stable than average wages per man on the payroll. At their peak in the third quarter of 1951, wages were more than 35 per cent higher than four years before. There is reason to think that piece rates had not gone up by more than 20 per cent at the most during this time.

The proportion of men on the payroll working each turn was about the same (86.5 per cent) in the third quarter 1947, in the fourth quarter 1949 and first quarter 1950, and in the second quarter 1951. Average wages per man rose by about 10 per cent in each of the intervening periods, and, supposing there had been no increase in overtime hours, this would have implied that the average level of piece rates had been going up by about 5 per cent per annum between October 1947 and October 1949, and nearly twice as fast in 1950–51. However, there are several reasons for thinking that the amount of overtime increased during this latter period. A larger proportion of men off work in the second quarter of 1951 were, of course, on holiday rather than unemployed; week-end earnings were much higher in 1951 than in 1949–50; and labour shortages were being felt in some of the largest ports. So it is reasonable to suppose that though piece rates may have been increasing slightly faster than in 1948 and 1949[1], a considerable part of the apparent difference was due to increased overtime working.

(*f*) *Seasonal variations in earnings*

Seasonal variations in earnings, though quite considerable in particular trades and ports,[2] are slight over the country as a whole (Graph II). The average level of wages—the principal item—depends chiefly on the percentage of turns worked each week, which is determined by general conditions of trade and recruitment policy more than by seasonal fluctuations. Such seasonal variations in wages as occur through holidays and seasonal shipping movements are partly offset by other items in gross earnings. Graph I shows that, whereas shipping movements reach a peak in the third quarter, wage bills—which do not include holiday pay—are generally highest in the fourth quarter. This is because the number of men on holiday is high and roughly equal in the second and third quarters of the year (when the N.D.L.B. tries to fit in all annual leave), lower in the fourth quarter, and lowest of all in the first. It seems probable that the third quarter peak in shipping movements is not reflected in dockworkers' wage bills, partly because it reflects the shipment of bulk cargoes such as sugar and iron ore, which require little handling (or timber, which needs a great deal of shipping space), and possibly because gangs work short-handed when men are on holiday. Exports, which require more careful work on the part of the dockers, reach a peak in the fourth quarter.[1]

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[1] Piece rates also appear to have been rising by about 5 per cent per annum in 1949–50, *i.e.* between the first two quarters of 1949 and the second and third quarters of 1950, when the proportions of men working each turn were also similar (about 82 to 83 per cent)—again assuming that there was no change in the amount of overtime working.

[2] As for example in the coal and fish ports. Between 1948 and 1951, coal trimmers' earnings were markedly higher in the last two quarters of the year (except in 1950), and fish dock workers' were consistently higher in the second quarter ; whereas the earnings of all dockworkers showed a relatively steady rise throughout the period.

The movement in the total wage bill between the fourth and first quarters often seems to reflect the trend in shipping movements (as in 1947–8, 1948–9, 1949–50).

(*g*) *The Guaranteed Minimum*

Though claims for an increase have been made on several occasions, the employers have always strongly resisted such proposals, and the Guaranteed Minimum has stood at 88s. a week since 1947. Average weekly wages per man on the payroll (including weekend earnings not set against the guarantee) have exceeded the minimum by at least 60 per cent throughout the period, and in some quarters by over 80 per cent—even though men on holiday or unemployed were included. Thus, weekend work apart, the ordinary dockworker could probably count on earning as much as the guaranteed minimum even when he was off work for as much as 1½ or 2 days out of the normal week. Consequently the sums paid out in Guarantee Make-up have remained small in total (in 1950 they amounted to £79,000 and in 1951 to £36,000).

III. The Regional Structure of Wages

(*a*) *Size of port and degree of underemployment*

Average wages per man on the payroll are largely determined by the degree of underemployment. There is therefore a connection between the average level of wages and the size of port, owing to the heavier underemployment in the areas made up of small ports.[2] Underemployment was very heavy only in the smallest ports, where shipping calls are less frequent, and was lightest in the largest ports. This disparity may have become greater since the war, owing to the increase in the average size of dry-cargo ships using

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[1] In 1949–51, imports of iron ore and timber were always highest in the third quarter; and so, generally, were imports of sugar, meat, palm kernels, and most non-ferrous metals. Tobacco and zinc were almost the only large imports which tended to reach a peak in the fourth quarter; but timber and several of the other commodities mentioned generally arrived in larger quantities during this quarter than in the first part of the year. In so far as the volume indices of exports and retained imports are any guide, they suggest that activity at the docks may have been greatest in the fourth quarter: the deflated value of exports was considerably higher in that quarter than in any other (except in 1951), while the corresponding figure for retained imports, though usually highest in the third quarter, was only a little lower in the fourth.

[2] The percentages proving attendance are available only by Local Board areas, which may cover more than one port; but in many areas the earnings statistics are available for individual ports. Within these areas, too, the figures of attendance money per man on the payroll bear out the suggestion that underemployment tends to be heaviest in the small ports.

British ports.[1] Moreover it has been suggested that central purchasing and bulk-buying have also tended to concentrate shipping in the largest ports.

Table IV shows that the only ports where, on the average, over 30 per cent of the men on the payrolls were unemployed (that is, proving attendance) each turn between 1946 and 1951 were those employing at most two or three hundred daily workers: Plymouth, and the small ports in Cornwall, East Anglia and the Wash, Ayrshire, Cumberland, and the Medway & Swale area. At the other end of the scale, the percentage proving averaged about 10 per cent or less in the largest ports: London, Liverpool, Manchester, Hull & Goole, and Glasgow.

Average wages between 1946 and 1951 ranged from £5 in Cornwall to £8 16s. in Grimsby & Immingham. The ports fall into three main groups: (i) those with low wages, under £7 on the average; (ii) those with medium wages, £7–£8, and (iii) those with high wages, over £8. These groups correspond with those by underemployment and size—with the significant qualification that wages in the principal coal and fish ports were noticeably higher than in other ports of comparable size.

The grouping of ports by average wages per man on the payroll does not bring out the true relation between average wages earned in the different ports. This is because (i) the payrolls include men drawing no wages during the week,[2] (ii) the figure of wages includes sums earned by the relatively few dockers employed at weekends (' non-guaranteed wages ', not set against the weekly guarantee). More detailed figures, of average wages earned within the week by men actually drawing them, make it possible to assess the importance of these two factors in two 12-month periods (second quarter 1949 to first quarter 1950, and year 1951). Table V shows how the figures then compared for the country as a whole.

(*b*) *Men drawing no wages*

Thus between 1949–50 and 1951 average wages earned within the week increased by 19s 5d., while average wages per man on the payroll had risen by 26s. 8d.—1s. 1d. of this being due to a drop in the number of men earning no wages during the week, and 6s. 6d. to increased weekend earnings. Both the proportion of men earning no wages and the extent of weekend work varied considerably between ports.

As might be expected, the proportion of men drawing no wages was highest in the ports with the heaviest degree of underemployment. Thus, while for the country as a whole the difference between wages per man on the payroll and wages per man earning wages was 5s. 1d. in 1949–50 and 4s. in 1951, it reached a maximum of 13s. 8d. in Medway & Swale in 1949–50, and 17s. 3d. in Cumberland in 1951: these two areas having had the highest proportions proving in those years. Since on the average 9 per cent and 7 per cent respectively of all men on the payrolls there were doing no work at

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[1] See *Report of the Working Party on the Turn-Round of Shipping in the U.K. Ports*, 1948, p. 5.

[2] *i.e.* drawing only holiday pay and/or attendance money and/or guarantee make-up.

TABLE IV

Wages, and Percentages Proving Attendance, in Different Port Areas, 1946–51

Port areas grouped by average weekly wages per man on the payroll	*Average percentage proving attendance*
Low average wages (under £7)	
Areas of small ports :	
Cornwall Plymouth East Anglia Medway & Swale[1]	over 30
Preston	26
East Scotland[2]	21
Medium average wages (£7–£8)	
Areas of coal and fish ports (except largest) :	
Ayrshire (coal) Cumberland (coal)	over 30
Tyne & Wear[3] coal) South Wales (coal) Aberdeen (fish) Fleetwood (fish)	over 20
Areas of large general ports (of over 1000 daily workers) :	
Bristol & Severn[4] South Coast Greenock[5]	15 to 20
Liverpool Manchester Hull & Goole Glasgow[4]	about 10 or less
High average wages (over £8)	
Areas of largest coal and fish ports :	
Middlesbrough & Hartlepools (coal)	17
Grimsby & Immingham (fish and coal)	15
Largest general port :	
London	9

Note.—Annual averages of weekly *gross earnings* per man on the payroll 1942–1951 are given in Appendix A. Figures of payrolls are also given, to indicate roughly the changes in the numbers of dockworkers in each port area during and since the war. Estimated annual averages of the percentages of men proving attendance 1946–51 are given in Appendix B.

[1] Percentage proving excluding 1951 as exceptional.

[2] This area includes the relatively large port of Leith ; the percentage proving was higher in the other ports, particularly Dundee. About one-ninth of the men are in the Fifeshire coal ports.

[3] The figures for 1946 and 1947 include the port of Barrow, where there are only about 80 daily workers (none of them coal trimmers). But wages there appear similar to those in Cumberland ports.

[4] Percentage proving excluding 1946 as exceptional.

[5] Greenock is included in this group because of its proximity to Glasgow.

TABLE V

Wages per Man on the Payroll and per Man Earning Wages (shillings)

	1949–50[1]	1951
Average wages per man on the payroll	160.0	186.7
difference due to men earning no wages	*+5.1*	*+4.0*
Average wages per man earning wages	165.1	190.7
non-guaranteed wages (weekend earnings)	*—9.3*	*—15.5*
Average wages for work within the week	155.8	175.2

[1] Here, and elsewhere, 1949–50 covers the last three quarters of 1949 and the first of 1950.

all each week, wages actually earned by men at work were considerably higher than the payroll figures suggest. But in other areas—notably Preston, South Coast, and Fleetwood—fairly heavy underemployment was distributed wholly among men earning wages, so that the figures of average wages per man on the payroll do not seriously understate average wages per man earning them.

This factor was of course more important in the earlier years, when underemployment was heavier. Activity at the docks had increased by 1951, and in that year Cumberland and East Anglia[1] were the only areas where average wages per man on the payroll were seriously affected by the proportion of men drawing no wages each week.[2]

(*c*) *The pattern of weekend earnings*

In 1949–50 rather more than one man in five of all those earning wages was working at weekends, and weekend earnings averaged about 45s. per man actually at work. In 1951 the proportion of men earning wages who did weekend work had risen to more than one in four, and average earnings were almost 54s. The amount of weekend work varied greatly between ports, but this shows up in the proportion of men working rather than in the average sums earned. In 1951, for example, these amounted to over £2 a head in all ports except Medway & Swale, Cornwall, and Fleetwood.

The pattern of weekend earnings was similar in the two years. They formed an outstandingly high proportion of total wages in Plymouth and Southampton, because many of the ships passing through were liners on strict schedule and vessels carrying perishables such as fruit and vegetables from the Channel Islands and the Continent. Partly for the same reason, no doubt, weekend earnings were also high in London and some of the other large ports, although here this may have been partly due to almost full employment during the week. By contrast, in Middlesbrough and in Workington (the principal port in Cumberland), weekend earnings were important despite considerable underemployment, owing to the practice of shift working.[3] These were, however, the only coal (or fish) ports where weekend earnings per man earning *any* wages approached the average for the country as a whole : in several of the smaller coal ports (and in the fish ports of Aberdeen and Fleetwood) the figure amounted to only 2 or 3 shillings a week as against the national average of nearly 16s. (Table V).

Thus, because weekend earnings were higher in the other less specialised ports, the advantage enjoyed by the coal and fish ports was more marked in terms of wages earned within the week than in total wages. Only in London, Hull & Goole, and Medway & Swale, did wages earned within the week exceed £7 18s. on the average for 1949–50 and 1951, and these were all ports where conditions in 1951 were exceptional.[1] But, as Table VI shows, wages earned within the week reached or exceeded this figure in all coal and fish ports except Aberdeen. During both 1949–50 and 1951 the coal and fish trades were relatively depressed, so that this difference was probably even more marked in earlier years.[2]

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[1] Which includes the Wash ports.

[2] In 1949–50 however, this proportion was quite considerable in 7 areas besides Medway & Swale, reaching 9 per cent in Greenock, 7 per cent in E. Anglia (as against 6 per cent in 1951) rather under 4 per cent in Cumberland, and over 1½ per cent in Bristol & Severn, Grimsby & Immingham, London, and S. Wales.

[3] Both the percentage of men drawing attendance money, and the average wages of men in work, are kept up since some dockers work a double shift at overtime rates while other dockers are consequently unemployed.

TABLE VI

Wages in Different Port Areas, 1951 (shillings)

Port areas grouped by average wages earned within the week in 1949–50 and 1951 together	*Average wages*				
	per man on payroll	*per man earning wages*			
	total 1951	*total* 1951	*for week-end work* 1951	*for work within week* 1951	*for work within week (average 1949-50 & 1951)*
Average wages under £7					
Cornwall	134.0	138.2	4.8	*133.4*	(120.1)
Plymouth	175.0	177.9	23.9	*154.0*	(137.7)
Average wages £7–£8					
South Coast	194.0	195.9	40.2	*155.7*	(143.7)
East Anglia	156.4	164.5	8.4	*156.1*	(146.5)
Bristol & Severn (L)	176.6	181.1	16.0	*165.1*	(147.7)
Manchester (L)	165.1	169.8	16.5	*153.3*	(149.1)
Preston	165.7	168.2	10.1	*158.1*	(149.2)
Liverpool (L)	168.4	170.6	14.3	*156.3*	(149.6)
Glasgow (L)	187.3	188.7	24.2	*164.5*	(157.2)
Greenock	180.7	183.4	20.8	*162.6*	(157.2)
Barrow	171.9	180.7	16.7	*164.0*	(156.4)
East Scotland	173.5	178.0	10.0	*168.0*	(158.0)
Aberdeen (F.)	162.5	167.4	2.8	*164.6*	(154.5)
Fleetwood (F)	160.7	163.5	2.2	*161.3*	(158.0)
Average wages £8–£9					
Cumberland (C)	166.1	183.4	17.9	*165.5*	(159.2)
Ayrshire (C)	144.6	149.1	2.1	*147.0*	(160.9)
Middlesbrough & Hartlepools (C) ...	167.5	176.6	17.0	*159.6*	(165.0)
South Wales (C)	186.3	191.7	10.1	*181.6*	(171.2)
Tyne & Wear (C)	184.6	186.2	5.2	*181.0*	(177.9)
Hull & Goole (L)	188.1	190.9	13.4	*177.5*	(162.7)
Average wages over £9					
Medway & Swale	210.1	214.2	4.0	*210.2*	(180.0)
London (L)	209.0	214.2	16.4	*197.8*	(185.5)
Grimsby & Immingham (FC)... ...	208.0	212.0	10.2	*210.8*	(193.9)

L : large general ports. F : main fish ports. C : main coal ports.

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[1] Hull & Goole were exceptionally busy owing to large timber imports from Scandinavia and heavy imports from Europe generally ; Medway & Swale were receiving an overflow of shipping from London.

[2] See p. 354.

IV. Hours of Work

Differences between ports in average wages earned within the week throughout the year may of course be due to differences in hours worked or in rates of pay—or in both. Unfortunately there is virtually no information about either. Only the most tentative explanations can therefore be put forward concerning differences in average wages; and any comparisons of the dockers' position with that of workers in other industries must therefore be highly speculative. In the following section some attempt is made to assemble the little evidence which can be drawn from available statistics.

(*a*) *The effect of holidays*

One small adjustment can be made for holidays, which affect average wages per man earning wages considerably more in some areas than in others.

In 1951, a dockworker who had been registered throughout the year would have been eligible for one week's annual leave[1] and for public holidays —making a total of twelve days' holiday in all. Holidays are paid at the national minimum time rate, and the 1951 figures suggest that holidays were taken up in full.[2] The proportion of occasional days taken off work by men earning wages was considerably higher in some areas than in others. For example, in Glasgow and Greenock, Tyne & Wear, South Coast, and Liverpool, much the greater part of holiday time was accounted for by men earning wages being on holiday for part of the week.[3] In other areas however— particularly the shift-working ports of Middlesbrough and Workington[4]— most of those on holiday were off work for two whole weeks. This may be because work has to be carried on during public holidays, since these ports serve the iron and steel industry (where continuous working is the rule); and ports and steelworks may virtually close down together for a fortnight. Table VII shows the relation between wages earned within the week in different ports after this adjustment for holidays has been made.

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[1] All men on the books at the end of March are eligible for annual leave, during which they receive the national minimum time rate. A second week's holiday with pay was awarded in February 1952. Normally holiday pay is not payable unless the leave is actually taken. Payments are made in lieu of leave only when a man leaves the industry, or dies, without having had all the leave to which he was entitled.

[2] During most of 1951 (from February onwards) the minimum time rate was 115s. 6d. Holiday pay during the year ranged from 4s. 3d. to 4s. 11d. a week in the different ports ; so that the average number of hours spent on holiday per man on the payroll ranged from 1.6 to about 1.9 a week. This is equivalent to saying that between 3.7 and 4.2 per cent of the average number of men on the payrolls were not earning wages because they were on holiday. It also implies that nearly 13 days holiday were paid per man on the payroll—although each man was entitled to only 12 days' leave in the year. However, any man who had taken his 12 days' leave, but had been off the payroll for part of the year through strikes or sickness, would tend to raise the average; so would any man who took up his holiday pay in full before retiring from the industry, particularly if his successor also took some leave.

[3] In South Coast this may have been due to the large numbers of men on the Temporary Register (nearly one-quarter of the total in Southampton) who would be entitled to public holidays and a few odd days' leave ; and in Liverpool it may have been caused by heavy recruitment during the year.

[4] And in Barrow and East Anglian ports.

TABLE VII

Relative Wages, and Hours Worked in Normal Turns, in Different Ports

Indices : average of 5 large ports[1] = 100

	1949–50		*1951*	
	Wages earned within the week	*Hours worked in normal turns*	*Wages earned within the week*	*Hours worked in normal turns*
Five large ports[1]	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
Cornwall	74	82	83	75
Plymouth	74	67	96	76
South Coast	92	91	97	88
East Anglia	95	73	96	81
Preston	98	95	98	98
Greenock	106	88	102	88
Barrow	104	89	100	87
East Scotland	103	84	104	89
Aberdeen (F)	101	73	102	82
Fleetwood (F)	108	70	100	76
Cumberland (C)	106	67	102	61
Ayrshire (C)	122	69	91	60
Middlesbrough & Hartlepools (C) ...	119	98	98	75
South Wales (C)	112	84	112	88
Tyne & Wear (C)	122	85	114	84
Grimsby & Immingham (FC)	130	84	126	92
Medway & Swale	104	73	131	92
London	121	97	123	100

[1] Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Bristol & Severn and Glasgow.

(*b*) *Estimated hours worked in normal turns*

Beside these figures we can set estimates of the hours worked in normal turns and in nightwork. We know the percentage of men on the payrolls proving attendance in the different port areas, and the proportion of all attendance money and guarantee make-up paid to men earning no wages. So we can estimate the proportion of all underemployment which fell among men earning wages, and hence the percentage of them proving attendance each turn. Applying this percentage to the total of 44 hours, we can obtain the average hours worked or excused in normal turns. But we also know the proportion of men excused and employed, and so can estimate the number of hours actually worked in normal turns in 1949–50 and 1951.

(*c*) *Estimated hours of nightwork*

If a man works a full night, he is excused attendance the following day. But he may also be excused attendance for valid domestic reasons, or because

TABLE VIII

Estimated Average Hours Worked and Excused in Normal Turns

	1949–50		*1951*	
	Worked	*Excused*	*Worked*	*Excused*
Five large ports[1]	*40.9*	*0.6*	*41.5*	*0.4*
Cornwall	33.6	2.3	31.1	2.0
Plymouth	27.2	2.8	32.2	1.7
South Coast	37.5	0.5	36.7	0.2
East Anglia	29.8	1.3	33.5	1.2
Preston	39.0	0.5	40.7	1.5
Greenock	36.0	0.6	36.7	1.4
Barrow	36.3	1.2	36.3	1.0
East Scotland	34.2	1.7	37.0	1.4
Aberdeen (F)	29.7	2.0	33.9	2.2
Fleetwood (F)	28.6	2.5	31.6	2.0
Cumberland (C)	27.6	7.7	25.4	8.5
Ayrshire (C)	28.1	2.5	24.7	3.2
Middlesbrough & Hartlepools (C)	40.0	4.1	31.3	3.9
South Wales (C)	34.4	1.9	36.6	1.1
Tyne & Wear (C)	34.6	1.0	35.0	1.0
Grimsby & Immingham (FC)	34.5	1.1	38.2	0.7
Medway & Swale	29.9	1.3	38.0	0.6
London	39.5	1.9	41.5	1.6

[1] Liverpool, Manchester, Hull, Bristol & Severn, and Glasgow.

—through age or sickness—he does not qualify for the full guarantee.[1] Because of this, the hours lost by men excused do not correspond with the hours worked in nightwork during the week, as they otherwise might be roughly assumed to do.[2] The average hours worked in nightwork (from Sunday to Friday) were therefore possibly lower than the figures given in columns 2 and 4 of Table VIII, but the main differences in excusals between ports would probably have been due to differences in the amount of nightwork. Thus the only areas in which nightwork is likely to have amounted to several hours a week for each man earning wages in both 1951 and 1949–50 were Cumberland (especially Workington), Middlesbrough & Hartlepools, and Ayrshire. Nightwork also probably averaged over an hour a week in Aberdeen, Fleetwood, Cornwall,[3] and Plymouth, but was relatively low in the large ports outside London and their neighbouring ports (Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, Bristol & Severn, Hull & Goole, Glasgow and

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[1] See p. 351, n. 2.

[2] If a full night's work amounted to about 8 hours, and excused a man for two turns. In fact, men working on Friday nights are excused only one turn (and men working on Saturday nights do not need to be excused on the Sunday).

[3] In Fowey, one of the principal ports, a 'flying shift' was worked fairly regularly from 5 to 9 p.m. Work in this shift would cancel a 'proving' already held for the day, and substitute an 'excusal'—so that it was treated rather like night work. This practice does not seem to have operated elsewhere, and is now discontinued.

Greenock, and South Coast). Although the proportion of men excused was rather higher in 1949–50 than in 1951, this may have been due to the lower activity at the ports causing more of the sick and elderly to be excused when they had proved attendance up to the limit of turns for which they could receive attendance money. If so, there was probably no more nightwork in 1949–50 than in 1951.

(*d*) *Overtime and total hours worked*

There is virtually no evidence on overtime hours or average hourly wages in different ports, to enable one to make any assessment of the total hours worked. All that we can do here is to draw a few general conclusions which, it seems to us, emerge safely from various estimates we have made. These estimates merely provide a wide range of possible hours or average hourly wages, and are not in themselves worth publishing. But they allow us to conclude that the relatively high level of dockworkers' earnings arises from a high proportion of ' overtime ' payments for work at particular times —after a certain hour, at weekends, during meal times, etc. We cannot, however, judge how far this high proportion is due to exceptionally long or inconvenient hours worked by dockers and how far it is the result of exceptionally favourable provisions governing overtime payments. Even the report of the Leggett Committee[1] is very cautious concerning the extent of overtime, although it suggests that this has become more onerous since decasualisation has restricted the men's freedom to take an occasional day off.

We consider that in the year 1951 payment for ' overtime ' may have accounted for over 35 per cent of wages in London, and for between 20 and 35 per cent in the five large ports of Liverpool, Manchester, Hull & Goole, Bristol (& Severn), and Glasgow. Average hours worked in 1951 were probably higher than in any other recent year, and in these ports underemployment—at any rate as shown by provings—was somewhere near the minimum practicable.[2] But even in the first quarter of 1952, when the degree of underemployment was much greater, ' overtime ' probably still accounted for about one-third of wages in London and Glasgow, and for at least one-fifth in the other four ports. There, average hours worked per man earning wages may not have totalled more than 44 a week in all—considerable underemployment in normal turns being, at most, only offset by ' overtime ' (including weekend work).

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[1] ' The difficulty under the Scheme of getting time off has been made more onerous in the case of some of the men by recurrent periods of heavy overtime working during recent years. There have, of course, been slack periods when overtime working has not been heavy, and even during busy periods the average amount of overtime being worked over the Port as a whole may not be very high. Nevertheless, we are satisfied from the evidence we have received that some of the men have been working an excessive amount of continuous, systematic overtime, including Sunday work, over prolonged periods. While it may be that the men concerned are not always averse to these long hours, this does not prevent them from developing as a consequence a discontented frame of mind and a greater readiness to join in a strike. We feel that the joint industrial machinery should consider whether means can be found to avoid the working of an excessive amount of overtime.' (*Unofficial Stoppages in the London Docks* ; *Report of a Committee of Inquiry*, May 1951.)

[2] Congestion was severe, and exports were subject to delays in most of the large ports. The effect of the token strikes in the first two quarters was particularly marked in Manchester and Liverpool. In London—partly because there was a good deal of sickness—there had been a shortage of men for several weeks, and the fact that most dockworkers were taking home heavy pay-packets was suggested in *The Times* (February 8th, 1951) as the reason why they were reluctant to come out on strike. Moreover, the New Zealand dock strike delayed shipping there and caused a pile-up of exports in this country, particularly in London. By October, the number of vessels in the Port was averaging over 140, as compared with 130 just previously and 112 pre-war. All the berths were then fully occupied, so that one special vessel, chartered to carry part of the backlog, had to be diverted to Hull.

Average hours per man earning wages seem to have declined sharply in the first quarter of 1952 as against the average for the previous year, and still more against that for the first quarter of 1951.[1] During the first three months of 1952, average wages per man earning wages were actually lower than the comparable figure[2] for the first quarter of 1951 (when the strikes may have had some effect in pushing up the earnings of those at work). Hours worked in normal turns were considerably lower in 1952; so that, even if rates had been the same, total hours would have been rather lower as average hourly wages would have been higher simply because more ' overtime ' payments would have been implied. But in fact rates had been rising fairly rapidly during 1951; so that in the first quarter of 1952 total hours were probably considerably lower than a year before.

There was an improvement in port working at the beginning of 1952 thanks to the absence of major disputes, some easing of pressure on particular ports, good weather, and better transport conditions. But the shorter hours of work in the first quarter seem to be explained largely by the measures taken to overcome congestion at the docks in 1951.[3] When traffic was at its peak, employers were keen to get Local Boards to recruit more men so as to prevent momentary shortages of labour and improve turn-round times. Thus the number of men working in the large ports was considerably higher in the first quarter of 1952 than a year before : the number of men sharing the work had risen by about 20 per cent in Liverpool and Bristol and Severn, 15 per cent in Hull & Goole, 10 per cent in London, and rather over 5 per cent in Manchester and Glasgow.[4] This rise appears to have been the main reason for the stagnation in average earnings and the drop in hours worked as compared with the first quarter of 1951, since activity was not widely different in these two periods. The increase in underemployment, the fall in earnings, and the heavier costs of the Scheme consequent on the decline in trade later in 1952, were all of course worse than they would have been had there been less recruitment in 1951.

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[1] It was common in 1951 for lorries bringing in exports to wait all day for unloading, and then to be turned away overnight. The great increase in the use of road transport was in itself a cause of congestion, since the docks were designed primarily to handle goods arriving by rail. In the Royal group, for example, while the tonnage of exports coming in by rail was double pre-war, the volume arriving by road was over 3½ times as great. (*The Times*, October 11th, 1951). In the beginning of 1952, however, ' a comparatively small reduction in the traffic . . . provided just that margin in available lighterage and shed capacity that made the difference between congestion and efficient working ', according to Mr. R. S. MacTier, Chairman of the London and General Shipowners' Society. He was also able to state that the amount of cargo handled each hour by a gang of dockers had improved. (*The Times*, July 31st, 1952).

[2] *I.e.* wages adjusted to allow for the fact that in 1951 more men took some of their leave in the first quarter than in 1952 (when practically none did, except in Glasgow).

[3] However, ' it is safe to predict that certain of the causes of the difficulties and delays that were [then] giving so much anxiety . . . will recur, probably next winter '. (*Ports Efficiency Committee, Second Report*, October 1952). So far, however, the problem has been one of increasing underemployment (which has risen to ' the order of 20 per cent ')—due particularly to the reduction in luxury imports, and to the drop in exports requiring careful handling. (*Manchester Guardian*, October 29th, 1952.)

[4] Again allowing for the fact that fewer men took leave in the first quarter of 1952.

(*e*) *Regional comparisons*

We can also make certain regional comparisons concerning hours. For example, we can compare hours known to have been worked in normal turns in different port areas, with wages earned within the week. As Tables VII and VIII show, hours worked in normal turns in the smaller port areas were in every case considerably lower than in London and the five large ports. In virtually every case[1] wages earned within the week were higher in relation to the average for the five large ports than were hours worked in normal turns. (In the chief coal and fish ports, wages earned within the week actually exceeded the average for those in the five large ports). This seems to imply either that average hourly wages in normal turns were higher in the other ports——which would be the case, for example, if workers there managed to obtain more special payments such as ' danger ' or ' dirty ' money—or, that ' overtime ' accounted for a higher proportion of total hours.[2] In a few cases (Cornwall, Preston, and Ayrshire in 1951, Preston and East Anglia in 1949–50), higher nightwork seems the explanation, but in most areas there would seem to have been more other ' overtime ' within the week. This suggests that the higher percentages of men proving attendance in the smaller port areas were not caused only by heavier underemployment, but also by greater irregularity of work.

If, for example, average hourly wages in normal turns had been the same as in the five large ports, total hours worked within the week would probably have been lower everywhere except in the main coal and fish ports (South Wales, Tyne & Wear, and Grimsby & Immingham) and in Medway & Swale. Average hours worked within the week would have been more similar (i) if average hourly wages in normal turns had been higher in this group of ports, or (ii) if hourly wages had been lower in the other ports—though overtime there would then have been relatively even higher. We consider in the next section whether the figures of earnings by occupation suggest that average hourly wages might have been higher in the main coal and fish ports.[3] There is no evidence on the second point. Although at first sight the 1949–50 figures for Cornwall might seem to imply that hourly wages were lower there than in the five large ports, the explanation may be connected with the working of the ' flying shift '.[4] Hourly wages in the isolated small ports may be low because few manufactured exports, requiring careful stowage, are handled there; but on the other hand most bulk imports are shipped through the large ports.

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[1] With the exception of Cornwall and South Coast in 1949–50.

[2] Unless, as is conceivable, overtime provisions were markedly more generous in the smaller ports.

[3] In Medway & Swale, this may have been so owing to the proximity of L [illegible] hourly wages seem to have been higher.

[4] See p. 348, n. 3.

V. The Occupational Structure and Earnings

(*a*) *Different occupational groups*

There is no very marked occupational structure in the docks. The great majority of all daily workers (almost 80 per cent in 1951) are entered in the earning statistics simply as dockers. The remaining 20 per cent are mainly men on sub-registers called upon to do slightly different work in particular localities. The principal categories shown separately are the coal trimmers in the ports from which coal is shipped, and the fish dock workers in the ports where large quantities of fish are landed. Together, they accounted for about 10 per cent of the total payrolls in 1951. The other 10 per cent consist of men registered as checkers, and men on the sub-registers peculiar to London—stevedores and lightermen. ' Historically the stevedore was the skilled worker whose primary job was the correct loading of the ship. Nowadays however, both stevedores and dockers undertake loading and unloading, and the term, stevedore, has lost its original meaning. For practical purposes it now means "a member of the Stevedores Section of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers" '.[1] Lightermen are skilled workers, whose occupation of handling and unloading into the Thames lighters requires an apprenticeship lasting several years.

The group shown as dockers in the earnings statistics consists in the main of ordinary dockers. But it also includes all those men performing the duties of checkers, coal trimmers, fish dock workers, lightermen, and stevedores in the ports where there are no special sub-registers for them, and crane drivers and riggers[2] whether there are sub-registers or not. In addition, it includes any dockers who may be performing some of these specialised operations even in those ports where sub-registers exist—for example, dockers working as checkers. (Special sub-registers for checkers were set up in 1949, because previously the younger men employed as checkers had tended to switch over to ordinary docking when they could earn more that way.)[3] Men shown as dockers may also be performing other specialised jobs, such as timber portering, for which there are no special sub-registers.

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[1] *Unofficial Stoppages in the London Docks* : *Report of a Committee of Inquiry*, May 1951. The N.A.S.D. is one of the three Unions covering dockworkers in London. It has a membership of about 7,000, about half consisting of stevedores. The Transport and General Workers' Union has a membership in the port of about 17,000, nearly all dockers ; while the Watermen, Lightermen, Tugmen, and Bargemen's Union, with a membership of about 4,000, covers over 90 per cent of the lightermen and tugmen. The N.A.S.D. and T. & G.W.U. thus cover men who are doing much the same kind of work and who are sometimes directly competing for employment. This has led to recurrent strife over a long period, and there is still much bitter feeling both among the leaders and the rank and file : ' it is significant that, within the Port of London, in those sectors where one Union is predominant there is much less unrest than in the areas where this is not the case.'

[2] Whose job it is to manoeuvre ships into the quays, and who are separately registered at the South Wales ports.

[3] Older or disabled dockers have been encouraged to learn the job of checking ; but most employers now prefer to draw a different type of man from outside the industry.

Since then ' dockers ' may be working in specialised occupations and earning special rates, while men registered as coal trimmers or fish dock workers may be working as ordinary dockers, it is clear that the earnings statistics do not genuinely distinguish between occupations.[1] An even more serious drawback is that they cover only gross earnings. This makes it impossible to estimate how far differences in the figures result from differences in the rates paid and how far they arise simply from differences in the amount of underemployment among the various groups. There are signs however that such differences in underemployment greatly affect the relative earnings of different groups in particular ports. The evidence for the existence of any differential in favour of coal trimmers or fish dock workers, which might cause average hourly wages to be higher in the main coal and fish ports than in the largest ports, is therefore scanty and conflicting.

(*b*) *Average earnings of coal trimmers and fish dock workers*

Coal trimmers form a substantial proportion of the total payrolls in four areas : over half in Ayrshire, rather less than half in Cumberland, one-third in Tyne & Wear, and one-fifth in South Wales in 1951. (The two latter areas then each accounted for roughly one-third of all the coal trimmers). There are also a few coal trimmers in Middlesbrough & Hartlepools; at Immingham (shown with Grimsby); and at Grangemouth, Leith and the Fifeshire ports in the East Scotland area; but in none of these three areas do they account for more than 10 per cent of the total payroll. Therefore even if there was a marked differential it would probably not greatly affect the average figures for these areas, though it might well do so in the others.

Since 1945, the average gross earnings of all coal trimmers who are separately registered have each year exceeded those of dockers and checkers outside London.[2] As Table IX shows, the difference was greatest in 1948 and considerably smaller in 1950 and 1951. Registered fish dock workers (more than half of whom are in Grimsby, where they account for about half the payroll, while the remainder are in Fleetwood and Aberdeen, where they make up 80 and 40 per cent of the payrolls respectively), also earned more as a group than dockers and checkers outside London, the difference being greatest in 1946. These figures suggest that both coal trimmers and fish dock workers might have received higher rates of pay—provided, that is, that their higher earnings were not accounted for by less underemployment. If they were not, one would expect to find higher average wages associated with a certain degree of underemployment in the ports with a

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[1] For coal trimmers however a wage-sharing system operates in some areas. Under this system, *inter alia*, a trimmer who has proved attendance and worked on ordinary cargo throughout the week may retain these earnings and, in addition, share in coal trimming earnings. Since the shares are paid through the Board's pay packets, they are included in the earnings statistics.

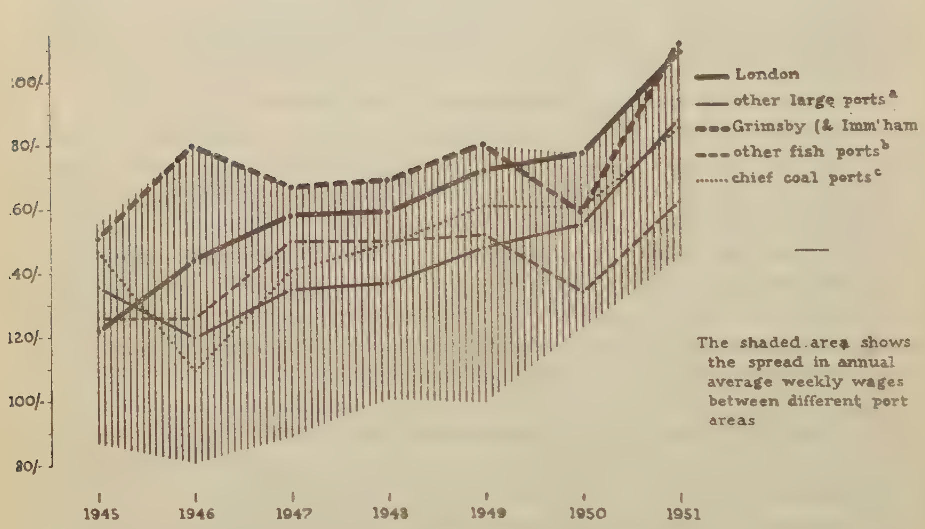
[2] We exclude London as average earnings there are exceptionally high, and all the coal trimmers and fish dock workers shown are outside London. The figures do not distinguish between dockers and checkers before 1950 : outside London, checkers earned on the average the same as ordinary dockers in 1950 and 1951, though in some ports they earned more and in others less.

TABLE IX

Relative Earnings of Coal Trimmers and Fish Dock Workers

Average weekly earnings, as percentage of average for dockers and checkers outside London	*1945*	*1946*	*1947*	*1948*	*1949*	*1950*	*1951*
Coal trimmers	105	107	103	121	120	113	109
Fish dock workers ...	103	121	110	117	117	105	112

III. Annual average weekly wages in different port areas, 1945-51



a Liverpool, Manchester, Hull & Goole, Glasgow with Greenock.
b Aberdeen, Fleetwood.
c Tyne & Wear, and South Wales ports.

Average wages per man on the payroll were consistently similar within each of these groups. The lower part of the shaded area represents wages in the smaller ports.

large proportion of coal trimmers and fish dock workers on their payrolls, than in those ports whose payrolls comprised only dockers and checkers. Thus the regional comparison made in Section IV (*e*) seems to support the existence of occupational wage differentials since it shows that, per man working, wages earned within the week were highest—in relation to the degree of underemployment—in the coal and fish ports.

Graph III shows how changes in the relative level of average wages in the chief coal and fish ports reflect the movements in the relative earnings of coal trimmers and fish dock workers.

(*c*) *Earnings of coal trimmers and fish dock workers in particular ports*

The figures in Table IX should not, however, be taken to imply that coal trimmers and fish dock workers earned more than other workers in each port.

In fact, Table X shows that coal trimmers earned consistently more than other dockworkers in North-East Coast ports and consistently less in South Wales, while fish dock workers earned consistently more than other workers in Grimsby & Immingham, and less in Aberdeen. At first sight this might seem to make nonsense of the idea of a wages differential.

But there is some evidence that these variations were due not so much to differences between the earnings of coal trimmers and ordinary dockers working a full week, as to differences in the amount of work available for specialised and ordinary dockers, in relation to their numbers, in the different ports. This applies to variations in the relative earnings of coal trimmers, both in a particular port and between ports. Thus the variations in the percentages shown in Table X were particularly marked for Tyne & Wear. The sharp increase in 1948 coincided with a sharp decrease in the average number on the payrolls[1] (possibly because the promise of a revival in coal exports was encouraging trimmers to return home to South Wales); and conversely a fall in their relative earnings in 1950 coincided with an increase in numbers on the payrolls. The same factor appears to have operated in Immingham, and even in Middlesbrough & Hartlepools, where the changes in the numbers were much smaller. In all the ports where coal trimmers earned consistently more than other dockers, fluctuations in their numbers on the payrolls seem to have been an important factor in determining their relative earnings. But where coal trimmers earned less than other dockers this was not so. In South Wales and East Scottish ports, relative earnings fell heavily between 1946 and 1947 despite a considerable decline in the numbers on the payrolls; and, after recovering in 1948, relative earnings continued to fall in 1949 and 1950—again despite declining numbers. It would appear that in these areas there is a surplus of coal trimmers which depresses their average earnings per man on the payroll, and that even a decline in numbers does little to remedy this. Since many of the men who leave would have been mainly unemployed, their going does not necessarily mean more work for the rest.

TABLE X

Earnings of Coal Trimmers and Fish Dock Workers as Percentages of Those of Other Dockworkers

	1946	*1947*	*1948*	*1949*	*1950*	*1951*
Coal trimmers in :						
Middlesbrough & Hartlepools ...	101	105	116	118	113	120
Tyne & Wear	109	105	146	142	137	126
Grimsby & Immingham	. .	. .	122	115	102	93
South Wales	99	85	97	93	90	95
East Scotland	113	95	107	103	94	92
Fish dock workers in :						
Grimsby & Immingham ...	115	113	110	113	110	106
Aberdeen	99	93	86	88	74	92

. . Not available.

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[1] *I.e.* daily workers only.

The explanation of the difference in the relative position of coal trimmers in the two main coal-shipping areas of the North-East Coast and South Wales is of course the different features of their particular coal traffic. The numbers of coal trimmers in the two regions have remained much the same as before the war—but coal exports from South Wales have been very much lower ever since, whereas shipments from the North-East Coast have been relatively well maintained, thanks to the larger part in their trade which coastal traffic to London and other British ports has always played.[1]

As with coal trimmers in Tyne & Wear, the relatively high earnings of fish dock workers at Grimbsy & Immingham seems to be connected with the fact that their numbers have fluctuated considerably—so that average earnings were maintained even when the amount of work declined. In Aberdeen, on the other hand, the low level of fish dock workers' earnings may have resulted from the lack of alternative forms of employment: although their position worsened until they were earning 25 per cent less than other workers in 1950 (they had earned about the same in 1946), there was no substantial decline in their numbers until 1951—when their relative earnings greatly improved.

To sum up, the most that can be said is that there are signs from the statistics for the country as a whole that the National Tariff may secure coal trimmers slightly higher average wages per hour than dockers receive; the difference between the relative earnings positions of coal trimmers in particular ports does not necessarily contradict this. The average earnings of all fish dock workers seem to suggest that they too may receive higher wages per hour than dockers; but there is no national wage scale, and this may be true only of Grimsby where fish dock workers' earnings are highest.

(*d*) *Earnings of specialised groups in London*

Earnings and wages in London have been rising in relation to those elsewhere ever since the end of the war; and the number of dockworkers employed there has formed a rising proportion of the national total, as an ever increasing share of all shipping has tended to use the Thames. Despite larger payrolls, labour shortages have often meant that dockers and checkers in London have worked longer hours in recent years than similar workers in other ports. This, and possibly the existence of higher rates and special supplements, has kept wages above those of dockers and checkers in nearly all other ports. Average gross earnings in London rose from 10 per cent less than the average for all dockers and checkers elsewhere in 1945, to about 10 per cent more in both 1946 and 1947, and to 17 per cent more in 1951[1]. It is therefore more informative to compare the earnings of specialised workers such as lightermen with those of dockers and checkers[2] in London rather than with the national averages.

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[1] Departures with cargo from both Tyne & Wear and S. Wales ports consist largely of colliers. In 1938 coastal shipping accounted for almost all the shipping leaving Blyth and Sunderland, and for more than one-third of the loaded tonnage leaving Newcastle-on-Tyne. In the S. Wales ports, it accounted for less than one-fifth of the shipping leaving Cardiff with cargo, and for only about a tenth of the shipping leaving Newport and Swansea. Coasting departures have been maintained in every case (and have notably increased in the Tyne ports and Blyth); consequently the tonnage of shipping leaving the Tyne & Wear ports in 1948 was nearly as large as pre-war, whereas in the three largest S. Wales ports it was only just over half pre-war. On the North-East Coast the differential in favour of coal trimmers is greatest in the small ports, employing the largest proportions of trimmers —in S. Wales it is highest in Barry, the port which handles most of the coastal traffic in coal. (See P. Ford and J. A. Bound, *Coastwise Shipping and the Small Ports*, 1951, Table xiii).

Lightermen

In 1946–7 there was a serious shortage of lightermen, and steps were taken to attract new entrants, by arranging for the payment (out of the Board's funds) of full wages after two years' apprenticeship. As a result, the total number of lightermen was increased by about 5 per cent between the end of 1947 and 1951, and now stands at about 4,000; the number of daily workers went up twice as fast, and is now about 2,500. As the number of lightermen has gone up, their relative earnings position has worsened. In 1948, the first year for which figures are available, lightermen employed as daily workers earned about 4½ per cent more than the average for all other daily workers in the London docks. This may have been because they were working more overtime than other workers. In every subsequent year their earnings have fallen below the average for other workers—by 1 per cent in 1949, 2 per cent in 1950, and 3½ per cent in 1951. The main reason for this is probably not that dockers' piece rates have risen proportionately to lightermen's, but that the amount of overtime has increased more rapidly for dockers than for lightermen.

During 1951 there was an acute shortage of lighters in London, particularly for the timber trade. One might expect that these conditions would create a need for more overtime working in the lighterage section, but in fact this is not so. Because of the arduous nature of timber portering, overtime is seldom worked; consequently at peak periods the craft become immobilised under load for longer stretches. To overcome the general shortage of craft, other trades adopt alternative methods of working. Sheds and quays are more intensively used; hence the need for overtime working to prevent congestion.

Stevedores

On the average, stevedores earned about 10 per cent more than ordinary dockers in London in both 1950 and 1951. But this differential was partly due to the fact that they were mostly employed in those sections of the port where earnings were higher. The Port of London comprises six main dock systems vested in the P.L.A., which are separately distinguished in the N.D.L.B.'s statistics. These are (in descending order of average gross earnings in 1951) the Royal Group; the Surrey Commercial Docks; the East India, West India and Millwall Group; Tilbury docks (situated about twenty miles down river from the main docks area); the Upper Pool; and the

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[1] In 1948, 1949 and 1950, the comparable figures were 12, 13, and 14 per cent.

[2] In 1950, when there was a relative shortage of checkers, they earned 15 per cent more than dockers in London; but in 1951, when their number was rising more rapidly, they earned about the same as dockers.

London and Saint Katherine Docks. In 1951 dockers' gross earnings in the last-named group of docks averaged 201s. a week; but they exceeded 210s. in the three first-named groups, where the vast majority of stevedores were working, and reached 221s. in the Royal Group. There, stevedores earned about 10 per cent more than dockers, but in the Surrey Docks and the India and Millwall Group, the differential was about 7 per cent.

These differentials may have arisen either from the traditional demarcations of work between stevedores and dockers, or from differences in their respective working rules. In the Royal Group of docks, for example, the demarcation of work is by ships: ships belonging to certain lines are recognised as ' stevedores' ships,' and ships belonging to other lines as ' dockers' ships '. But in other docks the distinction is between ship-work, and work on the quays and wharfs. Thus in the Surrey and the Millwall Docks, the stevedores claim the right to perform all ship-work.

Differences in working rules may also have tended to favour stevedores and to raise their earnings in relation to those of dockers, especially since the Stevedores' Section of N.A.S.D. withdrew from the Port Continuity Rule early in 1951. This rule, which was agreed in 1944 between the employers and Unions in London, provides that every worker ' engaged in the discharging, loading or ballasting of a vessel . . . is entitled and is required to complete the work for which he is engaged and his Book of Attendance Cards must be held by the employer until the work is in fact finished '. Stevedores now observe this principle only when they are engaged on accepted ' stevedores' work.' This causes trouble when, as is sometimes unavoidable, the gangs carrying out other work are made up of both stevedores and dockers. The stevedores get back their attendance books at the end of the day, and go back on call the next day : ' the dockers, on the other hand, must, on pain of discipline, return to the ship until the job is finished—and thus they will often be held up on the following morning waiting for replacements to be allocated by the Board. . . . Moreover, the stevedores, knowing that they will probably get other work on the next day, may leave the unpleasant or difficult part of the job to their successors.'[1]

VI. Summary and Conclusions

(1) All the available earnings statistics are given as quarterly averages. Gross weekly earnings include the holiday pay, travel time allowances, attendance money, and guarantee make-up paid under the Scheme, in addition to wages. It is therefore necessary to discount men on holiday or without work for the whole of a week, if the figures of dockers' earnings are to correspond roughly with those for workers in other industries.

(2) When no work is available, men receive attendance money. Wages and attendance money may not fall below the guaranteed minimum : hence guarantee make-up. (In 1950, attendance money and guarantee make-up amounted to about 4 per cent of the wage bill, but fell to only about 2 per

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[1] See *Unofficial Stoppages in the London Docks*, pages 8 and 23.

cent in the exceptional year 1951. They accounted for about one-third and one-quarter respectively of the levy on employers in these two years.)

(3) A very large proportion of dockworkers are paid piece rates. Apart from the tariff for coal-trimming, piece rates are determined in each port separately and take account of all local facilities as well as different types of cargo and ships. Consequently there are no representative figures.

(4) Piece rates paid in any turn may not fall below the national minimum time rate per turn, and are generally well above this.

(5) Wages are paid only for turns worked, and weekly wages are thus greatly influenced by the amount of underemployment. This is probably higher than in most industries, and is of course particularly susceptible to the rapid fluctuations in foreign trade.

(6) Underemployment has been, generally speaking, heavier the smaller the port. The earnings pattern arises mainly out of the consequent connection between the size of port and the average level of wages. Part of the heavier underemployment in normal turns may however have been due to greater irregularity of work (involving a higher proportion of overtime working) in the smaller port areas.

(7) Earnings have been highest in the neighbourhood of London and Grimsby. In 1949–50 and 1951 together, wages earned within the week ranged from over £9 there (and £8–£9 in the principal coal port areas) to under £7 in the small ports of the South-West. In most areas they fell between £7 and £8.

(8) The relatively high level of dockworkers' earnings seems to be accounted for mainly by special payments: a considerable proportion of cargoes—and of hours—being paid for at special rates.

(9) Relatively few men work at weekends. In 1951 those who did earned on the average nearly 54s. a head. Divided among all men earning, this amounted to nearly 16s. (*i.e.* over 8 per cent of total wages). The proportion of men working at weekends varies widely between ports. In 1949–50 and 1951 it was highest on the Channel coast.

(10) There is no very marked occupational structure in the docks. In most cases, men need not be employed exclusively in a particular occupation, and those on several of the special sub-registers may work as ordinary dockers. Moreover, it is impossible to judge how far differences in earnings may result from underemployment.

(11) For all these reasons, as well as because direct information on piece rates is lacking, there is little or no evidence concerning occupational or skill differentials in wages.

(12) However, the coal trimmers' National Tariff aims to give them rather higher wages per hour than ordinary dockers, and the average weekly earnings of all coal trimmers have been higher than those of other dockworkers outside London. (In some ports however their earnings have been below those of other workers—probably because they have had less work.)

(13) The higher average weekly earnings of all fish dock workers suggest

that they too may receive higher wages per hour. But this may apply only in Grimsby, where their earnings are highest. There is no national tariff.

All dockworkers normally employed through the N.D.L.B. must now be registered. This, combined with the very real benefits obtained under the Scheme, has probably tended to keep the numbers of men attached to the docks more constant than they would otherwise have been in the fluctuating trade conditions of recent years.

Although the N.D.L.B. determines a ' sanctioned strength ' for each port area every six months, difficulties tend to arise if a register needs to be cut down or expanded to reach this level. In practice, when a register appears too large, it is allowed to run down by natural wastage. Men are unable to take a temporary job outside the docks, because if once they leave they have no right to reinstatement. Moreover, the Local Boards have experienced great difficulty in cutting down numbers even where—as in Glasgow in 1945–6—the volume of work was contracting from an abnormal level. Conversely, when labour shortages are being felt, the Local Boards may theoretically either take on unregistered men for ' peaks of short duration ' or, alternatively, expand the registers. But in a number of ports (including London) it has not proved possible to adopt the former course; and the London strikes at the beginning of 1951 illustrate the dockers' stubborn resistance to the latter—even at a time when protests were being made against overtime working.

The resulting inflexibility in the number of men dependent on the docks means that fluctuations in activity are very clearly reflected in the proportion of men working each turn, and in average earnings. In other industries, sharp fluctuations in activity are reflected mainly in the numbers employed. With few exceptions, extensive short time is uncommon; and any idle time there may be within normal working hours goes unrecorded : it is tacitly assumed that such hidden underemployment can be disregarded. When activity declines, men are laid off, have to seek other jobs, and are taken on again only when trade revives. In the docks, however, men are not laid off by the Board in this way : they are retained, even though there may be little work for them to do. It might therefore be argued that part of the underemployment of dockers is, in effect, disguised unemployment, and that their retention in slack times is an avoidable waste of manpower. But it must be borne in mind that traffic in particular ports fluctuates sharply and widely, and that the costs involved in a temporary labour shortage are far greater than they would be in most factories. A week or two spent in re-engaging labour is perfectly feasible for the majority of manufacturing concerns; but it would be out of the question in the docks when, as often happens, traffic suddenly increases.

The fact that variations in the proportion of men working have such a marked effect on earnings has made it necessary to adopt a rather different treatment from that used in our earlier articles on engineering and shipbuilding.[1] Moreover, two of the main questions which we discussed there—the relation between rates and earnings, and skill differentials—are of much less importance in the docks, where there is in any case less scope for a national wage structure.

In the first place, the national time rate for dockworkers is a minimum and has very little influence on actual earnings—especially since hardly any dockworkers are paid by time. Basic piece rates are fixed locally with the aim of ensuring roughly the same hourly earnings for the same amount of effort, but are not designed—as they are in engineering and some other industries—to secure earnings exceeding the time rates by a specified percentage. It is true that piece rates paid in any turn may not fall below one-eleventh of the national minimum time rate; but, since a man may be without work for several turns, his weekly earnings may fall short of the national minimum—although the effect of such short time is, very often, offset by his working 'overtime' (*i.e.* outside the normal hours). This combination of short time with overtime is frequent in the docks. Thus, since variations in earnings may be due as much to changes in the composition of hours worked as to changes in the level of piece rates, and since there is no direct information on either, there is little relevance in comparing piece-work earnings with the minimum time rate.

Again, there is no hierarchy of skill in the docks comparable with that in engineering or shipbuilding. Most dockworkers perform operations requiring similar aptitudes—notably manual strength—and similar training, and men often shift between occupations. A few groups of workers such as checkers and lightermen do rather different work, but even between dockers and lightermen there is not the same distinction of skill as there is between labourers and precision workers. As occupational distinctions in the docks do not involve very different types of skill, the question of skill differentials in wages hardly arises. Docking is, in fact, essentially a labouring industry.

But, owing to the lack of information on the fluctuating hours worked by dockers, it is very difficult to compare their position with that of similar workers. Labourers in manufacturing industry tend to work longer hours than their fellow-workers, as we have previously shown: in engineering, labourers were working about 50 hours a week in 1951 as against an average of about 48 for other men[2]; while average hours in road haulage, civil engineering contracting, and agriculture exceeded 50 a week. Long hours tend, of course, to raise earnings disproportionately because overtime is being worked and paid for at enhanced rates. The standard working week of 44 hours applies not only to nearly all manufacturing industry, but also to the occupations just mentioned (except agriculture[3]). Thus long hours help to bring average weekly earnings in such occupations above, or nearly up to, the average of 165s. for men in manufacturing industry generally: the comparable figures being 177s. for civil engineering contracting, 156s. for road haulage, and 171s. for permanent employees (weekly workers) of dock, harbour, and canal authorities.

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[1] BULLETIN, June, July and November–December 1951.

[2] Figures kindly made available by the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation.

[3] The proportion of overtime was lower in agriculture because of the longer standard week (47 hours in England and Wales, and 48 in Scotland). Partly for this reason, money earnings were low (in the 12 months from April 1951 to March 1952 they averaged only 125s. a week in Great Britain); but they are not really comparable with earnings in other occupations owing to the special conditions under which agricultural labourers work and live.

At this time—*i.e.* during the second quarter of 1951—daily workers employed by the N.D.L.B. were earning as much as 196s. a week on the average.[1] The figures for the whole year 1951, and also for the first quarter of 1952, were very similar. This high level of earnings requires special explanation. In the first place, nearly all dockworkers employed by the day are pieceworkers. This alone might be expected to raise their earnings above those of other groups consisting mainly of timeworkers; for, since piece rates are intended as incentives to more rapid working, they generally yield the pieceworker rather more for a particular task than a timeworker is expected to make. (The Ministry of Labour figures show that weekly workers at the docks, harbours, and canals earned considerably less, although they worked about 50 hours a week.) But in practice, against the national background of wage restraint, a more important factor may have been the scope given by *ad hoc* local bargaining.[2] This has enabled dockers to push up their wages fairly steadily by means of increased special payments, even when the national rate has remained unaltered.

Secondly, the high earnings are also partly explained by an exceptional proportion of payments at enhanced overtime rates. This is because daily workers at the docks, unlike most other workers, may earn ' overtime ' rates even when they are working much less than 44 hours a week (or 8 hours a day) in normal working hours. Even in the busy year 1951, when the proportion of idle turns was near a minimum, they were working only about 41½ hours in normal turns at most of the large ports. We believe that payments for ' overtime ' may possibly have accounted for as much as 35 per cent of all wages in London, and for between 20 and 35 per cent in Liverpool, Manchester, Hull & Goole, Bristol & Severn, and Glasgow. By contrast, we estimate that in engineering generally overtime accounted for only about 10 per cent of earnings, though it made up about 15 per cent of the earnings of engineering labourers. Engineering workers must work the full day or shift before earning enhanced rates for overtime, and so we assume that, on the average, overtime rates are paid only on hours in excess of 44.[3] Even if we were to make similar assumptions for dockworkers, and in effect discounted part of dockworkers' ' overtime ' payments as offsetting the hours they did not work in normal turns, they would still seem to have earned a relatively high proportion of overtime payments in 1951.

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[1] Dockers' earnings in the fourth quarter of 1951 were 24 per cent higher than four years earlier. The corresponding advances for other groups (October figures) were: civil engineering contracting, 40 per cent; road haulage, 24 per cent; dock, harbour, and canal (weekly workers), 23 per cent; all workers covered by Ministry of Labour earnings enquiry, 30 per cent; agricultural labourers (October–March figures), 21 per cent.

[2] *Cf.* H. A. Turner, *Trade Unions, Differentials and the Levelling of Wages, Manchester School*, September 1952, p. 226n.

[3] All overtime being reckoned at time-and-a-third, which is the rate for a stretch of overtime not exceeding two hours. On this basis, overtime earnings may be very slightly understated since overtime in excess of two hours in any stretch, and (in a 5-day week) Saturday morning working, is paid at time-and-a-half, while Sunday work is paid at double time.

In the first quarter of 1952, earnings were lower in several of the large ports; but the average for the country was kept up by high earnings in a few ports—notably in London and Glasgow. There, average earnings amounted to 225s. and 211s. respectively per man on the payroll, and we consider that overtime probably accounted for about a third of all wages. Thus the high level of earnings again appears due to an unusually high proportion of enhanced payments. But in Liverpool, Manchester, Hull & Goole, and Bristol & Severn, earnings had fallen to about 175s. a week, and so were much nearer the figures for other labouring occupations. We consider that ' overtime ' payments probably accounted for at least a fifth of wages in these ports, even though total hours worked (including weekend work and other overtime) probably did not exceed 44 a week. Thus here it would seem that work considered as ' overtime ' helped dockworkers to earn more, in fewer working hours, than labourers in other occupations.

It is true that dockworkers are required to attend at every call, and that when no work is available they receive attendance money at a rate far below their normal earnings per turn; and it may be argued that the ' overtime ' pay they earn at other times is a compensation for this, and for the inconvenience of having their work spread irregularly over the twenty-four hours. But how far enhanced payments represent an appropriate monetary reward for long or inconvenient hours, and how far they may be the outcome of the dockers' key position, solidarity and bargaining strength, cannot be assessed without the actual figures of hours worked.[1]

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[1] It is not clear whether the returns now being devised at the instigation of the Ports Efficiency Committee, to show trends in shipping turn-round and in cargo handling at each main port, will throw any light on hours actually worked or on efficiency in terms of labour cost.

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APPENDIX A

Average Weekly Gross Earnings and Average Numbers on Payrolls

Port areas	*Weekly Earnings per man on the payroll (shillings)* 1942 (2nd half)	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	*Numbers on Payrolls* 1942 (2nd half)	1945	1951
Areas of small ports :													
Cornwall	...	110	139	114	116	119	126	128	146	158		243	235
Plymouth	121	143	175	140	135	167	163	166	153	193	226	297	204
East Anglia	121	128	128	131	133	166	151	160	157	186	255	395	558
Medway & Swale	. .	. .	. .	. .	(144)[1]	156	164	169	175	224	. .	. .	119
Preston	. .	. .	131	130	125	(133)[3]	135	153	152	174	. .	443	356
East Scotland[2]	107	122	126	125	128	151	158	159	162	187	1,381	1,711	1,728
Areas of coal and fish ports (except largest) :													
Ayrshire (C)	110	131	130	137	161	168	169	190	174	174	167	208	162
Cumberland (C)	130[4]	151[4]	169[4]	152[4]	182[4]	182[4]	155	174	176	176	. .	316	159
Tyne & Wear (C)	115	156	178	172	139	171	171	186	184	201	989	1,965	1,847
South Wales (C)	148	164	185	159	137	156	169	174	175	201	3,901	4,589	2,849
Aberdeen (F)	112	120	132	139	143	160	160	164	156	178	475	672	661
Fleetwood (F)	...	(121)[1]	153	151	162	168[5]	170	174	155	182	. .	486	385
Areas of large general ports :													
Bristol and Severn	142	153	158	138	130	146	138	142	151	196	2,712	2,590	1,790
South Coast	144[6]	141[6]	182[6]	164[6]	131[6]	157	172	168	183	207	710	1,648	2,069
Greenock[7]	144	. .	173	154	132	137	157	171	173	196	5,029	577	384
Glasgow		. .	156	153	142	150	146	168	179	197		3,840	2,702
Liverpool	142	. .	162	152	140	142	149	155	161	176	15,257	14,817	15,597
Hull and Goole	113	125	154	139	118	142	146	159	161	195	2,215	3,428	3,436
Manchester	131	. .	146	138	133	154	151	160	164	175	3,221	3,088	2,733
Areas of largest coal and fish ports :													
Middlesbrough & H'pools (C)	100	150	159	145	153	167	177	186	195	187	1,047	1,455	1,443
Grimsby & Immingham (FC)	130	151	193	158	160	167	184	191	178	223	691	1,435	1,675
Largest general port :													
London	89	122	150	133	147	167	172	183	187	216	8,324	12,381	19,575

. . not available.

[1] Average of last 3 quarters only.

[2] This area includes the relatively large port of Leith.

[3] Estimate.

[4] Including Barrow.

[5] Including Preston.

[6] Figures for 1942–5 cover only Southampton ; and for 1946, Southampton and Poole.

[7] Included in this group because of proximity to Glasgow.

APPENDIX B

Estimated Average Percentages of Men on Payrolls Proving Attendance, 1946–51

	1946	*1947*	*1948*	*1949*	*1950*	*1951*	*(1949–50)*[1]
Cornwall	46	38	32	38	25	26	(21)
Plymouth	46	22	36	30	35	23	(36)
East Anglia[2]	40	26	40	34	35	27	(35)
Medway & Swale	26	29	33	30	33	12	(37)
Ayrshire (C)	39	30	33	25	35	39	(33)
Cumberland (C)	31[3]	29[3]	43	37	36	39	(34)
Preston	47	17	26	13	13	6	(11)
East Scotland	26	30	21	17	20	13	(20)
Tyne & Wear (C)	38	24	27	21	23	19	(20)
South Wales (C)	35	20	24	22	22	15	(23)
Aberdeen (F)	27	19	20	22	28	25	(29)
Fleetwood (F)	18	17	19	25	30	19	(31)
Middlesbrough & Hartlepools (C)	15	15	18	15	14	24	(10)
Grimsby & Immingham (FC) ...	15	13	13	14	21	12	(20)
Bristol & Severn	32	11	22	20	16	6	(12)
South Coast	25	19	24	22	16	15	(15)
Greenock	17	19	20	18	22	15	(24)
Glasgow	42	18	23	11	7	9	(7)
Manchester	36	6	14	7	4	6	(3)
Hull & Goole	10	6	16	13	14	4	(9)
Liverpool[4]	12	8	8	6	5	5	(5)
London	14	5	13	11	10	4	(8)

[1] Last 3 quarters of 1949 with 1st quarter of 1950.

[2] Including Wash ports.

[3] Including Barrow.

[4] Including Garston.

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pp 167-168 deleted, advertising